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SHRINE OF BERTHA.

A NOVEL.



THE
SHRINE OF BERTHA.

A NOVEL.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

BY MISS ROBINSON. (m. S.)

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VOL. I.

SECOND EDITION.

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1796.

SHRINE OF BERTHA

A NOVEL

IN TWO VOLUMES

BY MISS ROBINSON



LONDON

Printed for the Author by G. CANTHACK

BRITISH LIBRARY, ST. PANCRAS

1793

TO HER,
WHOM I AM PROUD TO ACKNOWLEDGE

AS

THE BEST OF MOTHERS,

THESE VOLUMES

OF *THE SHRINE OF BERTHA*,

ARE INSCRIBED,

BY

WITH EVERY SENTIMENT OF GRATITUDE
AND AFFECTION,

MARIA ELIZABETH ROBINSON.

No. 14, St. James's-Place,
March 12th, 1796.

TO HER

WILLIAM FROUD TO AGING WIFE

THE BEST OF MOTHERS

THREE VOLUMES

OF THE CARE OF INFANTS

AND INFIRMITY

THE LATEST STATEMENT OF OPINIONS
AND FACTS

MARIA ELIZABETH ROBINSON

THE NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY
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SHRINE OF BERTHA.

LETTER I.

EDWARD PERCIVAL,

TO SIR FRANCIS COLVILLE.

Dover, Feb. 179-

CONGRATULATE me, my dear Colville, upon my escape from maternal authority, and the venerable walls of Brazen Nose College! "Where ever musing melancholy reigns;" where a few musty folios in the dead languages were my most lively companions, and an old rusty commoner's gown and trencher cap the only insignia of erudition! I am ashamed when I recollect how long I have been a state prisoner, to gratify the whimsicalities of my Mamma! Thank Heaven, I am at length about to quit this antiquated

Vol. I. B subject,

subject, with the musty delights of Virgil and Tacitus, for the joys of a midnight serenade, and an Italian Opera.

Oh, ye enchanting shores of Italy ! ye are worthy of him ye are about to receive. Believe me, I shall experience much pleasure, when I behold, far off, this Isle of dullness and formality ; this nursery of folly ; this sepulchre of genius !

I shall write to you on my arrival at any place worth mentioning ; and give you an account of any adventures that may befall your modern Quixote, out of charity, to enliven the ponderous imaginations of our pedantic companions.

You are a most ungrateful fellow for neglecting to answer my letter from London. Remember we are to keep a clear

a clear account, for I should soon be tired of giving you credit.

Farewell,

Faithfully yours,

EDWARD PERCIVAL.

LETTER II.

SOPHIA CLEVELAND,

TO LAURA FITZ OWEN,

Grosvenor-Street.

Do not triumph, my dearest Laura, when I confess how sincerely I already lament having quitted our Convent, contrary to your persuasion, merely to indulge a childish curiosity to be acquainted with the WORLD : under the protection of such a being as Lady Cavil !—What a mournful state of perpetual degradation must be that of an humble dependant upon the caprices of such a woman ; since to me, whom she is pleased to distinguish by the title of Friend, her manners are as harsh and subduing, as the bleak Northern blasts, which howl over her native mountains. Yet to Lady Cavil must I, in compliance with the will of my
mistaken

mistaken father, be indebted for a temporary asylum.

With the supposed advantage of being allied to nobility, and possessing a tolerable share of national effrontery, Lady Cavil has talked herself into some degree of notoriety. She appears to have imbibed every fashionable folly to its fullest extent, without being gifted with sufficient understanding to enjoy them with discretion. She has an attentive ear for a tale of slander, which is, I believe, the only feminine propensity she possesses, and a heart most conveniently formed for resisting the supplications of the wretched.

I cannot forbear giving you a trifling anecdote of this very extraordinary being.

B3 Yesterday

Yesterday morning we were tempted by the clearness of the weather, to stroll as far as Kensington Gardens.— We had scarcely proceeded twenty steps, when our attention was arrested by a very decently dressed woman, with a little boy, whom she led, and another whom she carried in her arms. The youngest child seemed to be in a rapid decline. The unhappy mother, whose appearance bespoke her to have been faded from what “Her faithless fortune promised once,” after making a low and respectful curtsy, passed us, and was proceeding on her melancholy way, when her eldest boy enquired eagerly; “Will it be long, mother, before we reach our friends?” I could plainly perceive, under her tattered bonnet, “The modest virtues mingling in her eyes,” while she softly answered, “I fear it will, my love.”— Oh! what a world of mournful *presentiment* was comprised in those few words!

words!---Yet, certain I am, that this forlorn being would have proceeded wholly unnoticed by my charitable companion, had she not accidentally spoken in a dialect which proclaimed her of her own nation. When Lady Cavil, eager to evince her pretended generosity, enquired her name; and upon being informed, she rudely contradicted her, adding, "That she could not possibly be come of that *Clan*, for that her brother-in-law had married one of the Mac ——'s, and they were all noble from the reign of Fergus the First, King of Scotland!" Thus oppressed, and insolently contradicted by a woman of Lady Cavil's terror-striking appearance, the unfortunate mourner was silent. My companion continued. "As to your pretending to belong to the ——'s, I don't believe one syllable of the story you have been telling. A man of noble family has only to marry a *Mac* ——, I believe

I believe that the whole Kingdom of Caledonia will swear they are descended from the same clan." This inadvertent confession drew a loud laugh from the numerous throng, which her discordant tones had drawn together. Lady Cavil proceeded:---
"However, if any body is inclined to make up a small sum, I have no objection to add something towards it, though I am convinced it is throwing money away." I observed a stranger present something to the distressed and confused unfortunate ; every hand was now employed in the service of benevolence, every eye in that of sympathy, except Lady Cavil's, which seemed fixed in a stare of unfeeling curiosity, without the least inclination to relieve the distress she was so inquisitive to discover. Thus, after having read a long lecture on the folly of charitable donations, she returned her unopened purse into her pocket, adding

ing, "Now that we have so handsomely relieved your misfortunes, I advise you to go and procure some food for your infant *Ugolino* there, before he expires." With this kind and delicate admonition, she retired, followed by the smiles and sneers of the throng, amidst which I could distinctly hear---"That's the famous Lady Cavil; she's mad---It runs in the family;" and an hundred remarks of the same nature.

I am very much indisposed, yet I am engaged every night for this fortnight to come, to visit I know not whom, and pay my customary *devoirs* of sickening encomium!

Sir James Cavil is still in Flanders; and 'tis astonishing to see with what avidity his amiable wife looks over the papers for the list of killed and wounded! He is a worthy man, and I hope
he

he will return crowned with laurels : for his domestic alarum will render some *soulagement* necessary to counter-act its perpetual din. Poor dear Sir James has already lost an eye ; happy would it be for him, if he could lose his hearing also.---But we must submit to fortune, and bear her frowns with fortitude.

This morning I am to accompany Lady Cavil to sit for her picture, in the character of Diana ! I fear the painter will have some difficulty in pourtraying the fair Huntress, and at the same time preserving the resemblance to the original ! But as I am to be one of her nymphs, I shall draw the veil over every imperfection, and only now assure you how much I am,

Dear Laura,

Sincerely yours,

SOPHIA CLEVELAND.

LETTER

LETTER III.

HENRY COURTNEY,

TO EDWARD PERCIVAL.

I SHOULD have answered your letter before this time, had I not waited to address you by another name: I am now really sorry to be the messenger of melancholy tidings, but I am seriously concerned for your uncle, Lord Litchfield---I do not think there are the smallest hopes of his——death!! -- He has twice been given over by his Physicians, and has both times miraculously recovered, after Lady Litchfield had given minute directions respecting his funeral; nay, on the last relapse, untoward fate had contrived that Mr. Varnish, the Coach-maker, should enter the hall, with patterns of
lozenges

lozenges for the mourning chariot, at the very instant Dr. — was pronouncing the unwelcome intelligence that, “ His Lordship was convalescent.”

I had begun a very pathetic sermon, which I intended to have preached to the blubbering boors, at our parish church in the country; enumerating virtues which, for the first time, he would have been accused of exemplifying! So, you see, I had my share of disappointment also.

Entre nous, he is too much in the way, he should really make room for more worthy objects: many an amiable character would have given up the ghost long ago; but this everlasting old Peer and the grisly monarch wrestle with the skill of Humphries and Mendoza. I wish the veteran could
get

get a knock-down blow! for now he baffles the art of physic by living beyond its experiments.

EDWARD PERCIVAL,

Yours truly,

Paris, Feb. 1830.

HENRY COURTNEY.

I write to you, my dear and honoured Madam, from a place, where a mind, less studious than my own, might find sources of infinite amusement; but improvement, and not pleasure, is the object of my travels. Little should I deserve the indulgence of such a notice as you are, if I ere to dedicate to dissipation and immorality, a life which should be devoted to mental acquirements.

I hope, my dear Madam, you do not expect me to give descriptions of the different towns I shall pass through; for, indeed, my very constant application to the language, has prevented

LETTER IV.

EDWARD PERCIVAL,

TO MRS. PERCIVAL.

Paris, Feb. 179--.

I WRITE to you, my dear and honoured Madam, from a place, where a mind, less studious than my own, might find sources of infinite amusement; but improvement, and not pleasure, is the object of my travels. Little should I deserve the indulgence of such a mother as you are, if I were to dedicate to dissipation and immorality, a life which should be devoted to mental acquirements.

I hope, my dear Madam, you do not expect me to give descriptions of the different towns I shall pass through: for, indeed, my very constant application to the language, has prevented

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my attending to what people call *places of entertainment*.

I am frequently astonished to behold the avidity with which all ranks of persons crowd to the theatres; yet you will scarcely believe me, when I declare, that (notwithstanding my apartments are exactly facing the Opera House,) I have never been prevailed on to quit my beloved Homer, for all the raptures that melody can bestow.---

I have often been solicited to visit the *Spectacles*; and, in all probability, I might admire them; but, Madam, I confess I am ridiculous enough to prefer half a dozen old musty volumes, to the superficial delights of modern amusement. 'Tis true, that the young Englishmen, who are here wasting their precious time in all the splendours of luxurious folly, turn my laudable perseverance through the sober track of useful knowledge, into

contempt, and sarcastically advise me to become a brother of the *Grand Chartreuse*.

I fear, my dear Madam, I shall fatigue you with my dull epistles; but the mind which is absorbed in the mazes of literature, naturally acquires that dignified solidity, which will ever prevent it from straying into the paths of dissipation.

Suffer me to petition for an answer, directed to me at Lyons, *Poste restante*; and to hope that your approbation of my conduct will complete my happiness, and encourage me in those opinions, which will prompt me to pursue my researches after mental pleasures!

Adieu, my dear Madam;—allow me

the honour of subscribing myself, with
prayers for your health.

LETTER V.

Your most affectionate,

and dutiful son,

EDWARD PERCIVAL.

I hope you will give me credit for hav-
ing directed the Bowdler: as you are
interested in the business at Litchfield, the
task of deciphering my letter will de-
volve on you. I desire, right rever-
end Sir, that you will, "nothing ex-
terminate, or set down anything in malice,"
but read it, with justice, and give to
every moribund syllable its proper
emphasis.

I have sent enough for the good old
gentlewoman to ponder over, and re-
peat for these six months to come. Be-
lieve me, I can find other means of
employing my time in this school of
luxury.

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LETTER

LETTER V.

EDWARD PERCIVAL,
TO THE REV. HENRY COURTNEY.

Paris, March, 179-.

I HOPE you will give me credit for having queered the Dowager: as you are *Liseur en ordinaire* at Litchfield, the task of decyphering my letter will devolve on you. I desire, right reverend Sir, that you will, "nothing extenuate, or set down aught in malice!" but read it, with justice, and give to every moralizing syllable its proper emphasis.

I have sent enough for the good old gentlewoman to ponder over, and repeat for these six months to come. Believe me, I can find other means of employing my time in this school of luxury,

luxury, delight, and dissipation, than in composing Essays on virtue and philosophy.

I have been here only ten days, and I have already had ten thousand charming adventures. This is the most exhilarating spot in the universe! *Les femmes sont tres belles, et tres complaisantes!* Study is banished from my mind; honest old Homer sleeps at peace on my dusty shelf; and I actually suffered my venerable Virgil to find an inglorious grave, in the jaws of a little French barbet, while I was paying his mistress (an arch looking *Grisette*) for a pair of point ruffles!

My mother encloses me a letter, which I am to deliver to a Miss Fitz Owen, at Lausanne. I find she is my cousin; had she not been a relation, I should have flown upon the wings of impatience to see her: for after all, the sight

sight of one beautiful English woman (and handsome she must be, if related to me) is the only remedy to obliterate the false impressions of a vitiated taste; but when I think of a family party—"then comes my fit again!"—My mother writes me word that Miss Fitz Owen "is a perfect beauty." But I fear that her ideas of perfection are not of this century. She draws her conclusions from what women *were*, and not what they are! However, as three months hence will be quite time enough to visit the shrine of this sentimental recluse, I shall proceed immediately to Lyons.

Farewell,

Yours truly,

EDWARD PERCIVAL.

LETTER

LETTER VI.

SOPHIA CLEVELAND,

TO LAURA FITZ OWEN.

Grosvenor-street. March, 179--.

THOUGH just going to attend Lady Cavil to Mrs. Chesterville's Fencing Academy, I steal a few moments to write to my dear Laura.

I have of late led such a life of terrible dissipation, that I am really worn to a skeleton. Lady Cavil has contracted such a rage for seeing and being seen, that she is wretched, if she has not an engagement for every night in the week, and every hour in the day. Study, of every kind, (save that of dress) is entirely driven in disgrace from our temple of fashionable indolence. When I am gothic enough to touch my *piano forte*, Lady Cavil ex-claims,

claims, in her discordant dialect—
“ Well, Sophia, I really begin to despair of ever making you understand the manners of a girl of fashion, with your fine romantic ditties, and your tedious humdrum lessons. Once more I tell you, learn two or three Italian *canzonettas*; it is no matter how you play or pronounce them, because you know, child, 'tis vulgar to articulate at all in singing, or to attend to the pedantic correctness of composition; follow my advice, and you will soon claim the admiration of the *cognoscenti*; but while you set down to thrum one of Haydn's somniferous *sonatas*, you will be mistaken for some poor fidler's daughter, whom I patronize under my roof, to evince my hospitality, and adoration of *la belle science*; though you are convinced, child, that I don't know a crotchet from a quaver! But the world demands a semblance of every tasteful predilection; and while such
eccentric

eccentric ideas possess the weak nod-
dles of the fashionable tribe, those who
are not really *amateurs*, must at least

“ Assume a virtue, if they have it not !”
or content themselves with oblivion.
Oblivion ! oh ! horrible ! give me life,
and let the dull enjoy the bliss of inac-
tivity !”

Such were the effusions of refine-
ment ! Ruminatè on them at your lei-
sure.

I am enthralled in the spells of this
most detestable woman, and, (’till I
am of age) patience is my only re-
medy. If I were to quit Lady Cavil, I
should have every thing to dread that
malice and revenge could dictate ; for
the shaft of malevolence can sometimes
penetrate the shield of truth, and touch
the breast which is a stranger to its in-
fluence.

LETTER

Adieu!

Adieu! If I am not insane or broken hearted, you shall hear from me again very soon.

O dependance, horrid dependance! how art thou fraught with mortifications!—but thy antidote is contempt for those who inflict thy miseries. Once more,

Dearest Laura,
Your's most affectionately,

SOPHIA CLEVELAND.

I am enthralled in the spells of this most detestable woman, and (till I am of age) patience is my only remedy. If I were to quit Lady Cavi, I should have every thing to dread that malice and revenge could dictate; for the shaft of malevolence can sometimes penetrate the shield of truth, and touch the breast which is a stranger to its influence.

Adieu!

LETTER

LETTER VII.

SIR FRANCIS COLVILLE,

TO EDWARD PERCIVAL.

London, March 179--.

MY DEAR EDWARD,

ON my arrival in town, a few days since, I found a card from Mrs. Percival, for a masquerade which she gives, I understand, in celebration of the day, which, just one and twenty years ago, gave you to adorn the world! Don't be angry, when I confess, that I felt at the moment a glow of indignation flushing over my cheek, at the remembrance of your cruel and unjust banishment from this country, while your mother, under the pretext of reserving your fortune with interest, lavishes it away in the indulgence of every species of shameless dissipation; but, as comments are generally deemed unwel-

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come,

come, and impertinent, I shall leave this painful subject, and proceed to give you an account of the gala.

After debating with myself for a considerable time, whether I should refuse, or partake of the festivities of Cavendish-square, I at length resolved to go, merely to indulge my favourite pursuit after odd characters; and, throwing on a domino, I directed my course towards the temple of fashion, folly, and faro.

I had scarcely given my ticket at the door, when my ears were saluted by one of the loudest and shrillest screams I ever remember to have heard; I sprang forward, and meeting Courtney, enquired the cause of such a woeful sound amidst so much mirth. "Woeful do you call it?" said Courtney, smiling, "Why it was only Lady Cavil enjoying one of her own
double

double *entendres* at the expence of a group of matronly misses in masquerade; but come along I will introduce you to her." We then entered the card room together, and while I was making my bow to the "Honourable Lady of the House," I saw advancing towards us a mask in the character, or rather in the habit, of Diana. She instantly seized Courtney by the arm, and staring me, even *me*, out of countenance, said, in a half whisper, "Courtney, who is that? is he young? is he handsome? is he rich? tell me, tell me all about it; I die to see his face. Can you persuade him to unmask? do, do; make him, make him." She uttered these questions with so much rapidity, that I was really inclined to believe this good lady had certainly mistaken her character, and intended to represent an alarm-bell, instead of the Goddess of Chastity.

Courtney, after gasping like a person overpowered by a *tornado*, answered, "Madam, were you to set him the example, I have too good an opinion of his gallantry to suppose he would refuse gratifying your curiosity." Upon this challenge Lady Cavil immediately took off her upper mask, saying, in the most languishing tone, "I fear my unmasking will scarcely repay the gallantry or the curiosity of your amiable companion." Indeed, my dear Henry, she spoke the truth: for, I am sorry to own, that fear was the only sensation which this mountain nymph excited in my breast.

Picture to your imagination a face surpassing all the colours on a harlequin jacket, where every gaudy scrap is thrown in one unmeaning jumble, each seeming to enquire of the other "how it got there?"

This

This *belle masque*, after standing in the most affected attitude for some moments, to mark the progress of (what she supposed) my admiration, said, in a softened tone, "Are you indisposed, Sir? Don't you dance?" "No, Ma'am," said I, retiring a few paces towards the door. "Don't you play?" "No, Ma'am," I answered, still retiring. "Then," replied my torment, "if you neither dance nor play, if you please, we will talk, and TALK SHE DID!!

"Her tongue was like a rolling river

"Which murmuring flows, and flows for ever."

However, I embraced the earliest opportunity to escape; saying, that I had an engagement which would prevent my enjoying the delights of her conversation any longer; but that I was too sensible of perfect happiness not to return the instant it was in my power: then, without waiting for an

answer, I darted out of the room into the next, hoping that I might, by mingling with the dancers, avoid the persecution and loquacity of Lady Cavil!

What a happy man Sir James Cavil must be! where, in his prospect of life, a cannon ball, or his wife, is the alternative. I should unquestionably prefer the former: for that would terminate existence; while the latter is “never ending, still beginning!”

Fatigued with the clack of the prominent figure, I retired, disgusted with the whole group; where I beheld Devils without fire; leaden-heeled, and still more leaden-headed, Mercuries; vestals without chastity; young witches, and old coquettes! in short, where every thing was distorted, and the general order of nature destroyed by

by a dreadful *renversement*, and rendered truly contemptible.

Farewell! I now remind you of your promise: much is due from you on the score of description, where every breeze teems with animation, and every hour must be replete with adventures! where *la bella Campagna*, and the still more *bella Signoras* would surely inspire a mind less impregnated with *le feu Celeste* than thine!

Yours, faithfully,

FRANCIS COLVILLE.

LETTER

LETTER VIII.

LAURA FITZ-OWEN,
TO SOPHIA CLEVELAND.

Lausanne, April 1790.

'Tis now eighteen months, my dear Sophia, since you quitted Geneva, and I have received only two letters from you. Does the perpetual delight of Lady Cavil's society render you wholly insensible to the claims of real friendship? Or are you ashamed to acknowledge the miseries, which you voluntarily experience?—I wish you were here; you would be delighted with our new convent: it is upon a more liberal plan than the old monastery; and I need not say that Madame St. Bruno's brilliancy of mind sheds lustre through every avenue of our holy habitation.

“She

“ *She* raised these hallowed walls, the desert smil’d,
“ And Paradise was open’d in the wild !”

The society of this tranquil spot consists of forty Pensioners, exclusive of the grey sisters. We have seven English girls, from the age of eleven to eighteen, some of whom are extremely amiable. My favourite is the charming Belinda Warton ; she is indeed the rose of our holy *Parterre*, and has the most perfect affection for me. She is entirely unknown to our Abbess, (except by her very distinguished talents) for she was placed here by an English gentleman, when only six years old, who, every spring, remits a splendid sum for her board and education. You must remember her, when you visited Geneva. She is more interesting than handsome ; mild, obliging, and tender ! with a soft melancholy, which attaches extremely. We pass all our hours of study together ; and as the elder boarders are permitted to

to walk out with a lay sister for their guard, we frequently ramble at sun-set over the romantic scenes so beautifully described by the divine Rousseau! and for which this country is so justly celebrated! 'Tis impossible to give you an idea of their richness and variety, their enchanting solitude and wonderful sublimity!

We often wander along the margin of the extensive lake, which (glittering like a sheet of gold with the reflection of the declining sun, and quivering at every breeze that steals across its surface) bears the last vibration of the long sounding vespers: we view with delight the hills on every side, adorned with variegated vineyards, and beyond them (terminating the prospect) the tops of the distant Alps, covered with their snowy mantle! Sometimes we join the peasantry in their rural *fetes*; they appear to be the happiest, and
most

most harmless of the human race! I really am often almost tempted to fancy myself in a new world!

Our situation is healthy in the extreme: we have the finest fruits, glowing with the bloom, the effect of a cherishing climate; and the best diet of every kind; with new milk, eggs, small wines, &c. &c. We rise at seven in the summer, and at eight in the winter; we retire to rest always before ten; and our repose is replete with every thing that a tranquil mind can bestow. I am thus exact in my descriptions because I know that the minutest circumstance interests the affectionate heart, and if it were not for those *petit riens* the intercourse of mind would be dull and insipid. I wish you would be more constant in your correspondence. Remember, my dear Sophia, that I am in a convent, "remote from cities;" and can only
find

find amusement in mental delights!
We have neither concerts, Ranelagh,
masquerades, balls, or theatres; we
have only

“Long sounding aisles, and intermingled graves!”
where

“Ever musing Melancholy reigns!”—

Belinda Warton desires me to present her love to you: though unknown, you are *my* friend, and she insists on my not breaking through the invariable rule which I have made of participating with her in every delight of my heart.

Adieu,

Affectionately yours,

LAURA FITZ-OWEN.

LETTER

LETTER IX.

THE HON. MRS. PERCIVAL,
TO EDWARD PERCIVAL.

Camden-square, April 179-

MY WORTHY SON,

YOUR letter afforded me inexpressible joy ; in the first place, because it brought the consoling news of your good health ; and secondly, because it convinced me of your laudable pursuit in the road to wisdom : continue in that path, and you will be the admiration of rank ! the pride of your family ! and an honour to the title which you are destined to inherit !

Do not think of returning, at least for these twelve months ; be prudent, and economical ; remember you have every prospect of being a distinguished ornament to the peerage of England !

Avoid the females of Italy! I mean those of gallant reputation: they are abominable syrens; my son, they will destroy your plan of improvement, and seduce you from the pages of learning. We have too many examples of their artifice among our young nobility; and many a one who has set out an idiot has returned a knave. The only addition such characters will make to their heraldry, will be the fool's-cap, an emblem of the degraded state of the present generation.

Do not venture to the theatres: they are scenes of luxurious folly, and will corrupt the purity of your youthful mind. Mr. Courtney (my worthy chaplain) informs me, that he writes to you constantly: I know his letters are, and will be, replete with maxims of *sagesse*! he is a very wise and discreet young man; I could wish you had him with you for a travelling tutor,

tutor, but that I cannot part with him for any length of time, he is so extremely useful in the family.

Your fortune is hourly improving ; you will be as rich as you will be virtuous ; in both, the envy of a malicious and wicked world.

Don't forget, when you pass through Lausanne, to deliver the letter to Miss Fitz-Owen ; I hear she is a perfect beauty, and as amiable as she is lovely ! but I have never seen her. She has been educated in a convent, where she has resided from her childhood.

If you want any money you shall have it ; but remember œconomy, and that to be independent is the only way to be respectable. Adieu. Accept the advice and love of your

Affectionate friend and mother,

DI. PERCIVAL.

E 2

Your

Your uncle, Lord Litchfield, is in better health than I have seen him for many years.

LETTER

LETTER X.

LAURA FITZ-OWEN,

TO SOPHIA CLEVELAND.

Lausanne, May 179..

EVERY letter that I receive from my dearest Sophia comes with the sweetness of benediction; it reconciles me to the obscurity in which I pass all my days, and tells me, at least, that I am not wholly forgotten. Yet I do not repine at my situation, when I reflect that I am removed from the sorrows of a busy deceitful world, and perhaps, by my seclusion, escape many an anxious hour attendant upon splendor.

It sometimes wander from our abode of peace to the ruins of the ancient convent, at the distance of an hundred yards from the present habitable edi-

fice ; I often climb, with Belinda, over the rugged ground, or rest upon some moss-grown seat, hung round with ivy, and contemplate the gothic arches, mouldering at every blast of wind that whistles through them, scattering around their fretted fragments. It must have been a fabric of great extent, and singularly beautiful architecture ! Some parts of the shattered roof are still exquisitely painted, and the pavement is tessellated with marble of various colours.

The columns (which have most escaped the ravages of time and the seasons) appear to be the remains of a superb chapel, and the cloisters ; the former has yet a magnificent altar entire, and the latter bears the marks of many imperfect inscriptions, but the over-hanging weeds prevent my tracing the memorials of names or subjects. I have often wished to indulge my curiosity,

riosity, by hiring a peasant to remove the fragments, in order that I may fully examine their records, for

“Perchance in this neglected spot is laid,
Some heart once pregnant with celestial fire;
Hands, that the rod of empire might have sway’d,
Or wak’d to ecstasy the living lyre!”

The other night we stole out after vespers, and strolled to our favourite retreat, there we found

“Room for meditation even to madness!”

It was a clear moon-light evening; no sound was heard but the rushing of a distant water fall, and the nightingale, warbling from the adjacent wood; the pale light darted through the mouldering walls, silvering the dark ivy, covered with dew; and the whole scene was exquisitely touching to a mind gifted with sensibility.

While we were contemplating its
awful

awful beauties, a cloud passed over the moon, and we were suddenly left in total darkness.

Belinda pressed my arm as a signal of fear; I confess I felt a degree of dread more easily imagined than described. We sat for some time upon a sheltered fragment of the ruin, trembling and not daring to move, or speak, lest the sound of each other's voice should enable any passenger to trace our hiding place. At length we distinctly heard the convent bell strike ten, the regular hour for retiring to rest—the outer gates are always closed at nine for the night;—alarmed at the recollection of being so far from home, and the dread of being discovered out so late after vespers, inspired us with courage to venture from the ruins. “Belinda,” said I, “indeed it grows very late, and I am alarmed lest Madame St. Bruno should hear of our absence.”

absence." Miss Warton made no reply ; I took my handkerchief from my pocket, and tied it round her neck ;— I touched her hand, it was cold and trembling ; and by the light of the moon which shone upon our faces as we quitted that part of the chapel, I perceived that she was walking with her eyes shut !—"Heavens !" said I, "what is the matter, Belinda ?" are you not afraid ?" said she in a faltering voice. "No, indeed," answered I, ready to expire with terror.—"What should I fear ? Do you suppose me so childishly superstitious, as to entertain any alarm because we are in darkness." There is no more danger here than in our own convent : In any place, you may believe me, there is nothing to dread ; good spirits will not molest us, and surely Heaven will protect us against evil ones." "I wish," interrupted Belinda, "that you would not talk about them." "Why not ?" I

was

was at that moment alarmed by the sound of footsteps, and saw a man enter the gateway with a lantern. We were in an obscure corner of the ruin, and the moon being enveloped in dark clouds, it was impossible for him to discover our retreat. He brought a packet, or a small trunk, which he carefully deposited in the chapel; and then hastily escaped over the heaps of rugged stones, which formerly inclosed the burying ground of this ancient monastery. We listened with beating hearts to the echo of his footsteps upon the hollow ground, which was "loose, and infirm with digging up of graves," till the sound died away, and all was still again.

"Belinda," said I, "for heaven's sake now exert some resolution, and let us fly from this place; be assured this was a robber who has plundered some traveller, and been induced to
conceal

conceal his treasure 'till he finds a convenient opportunity for carrying it away.'

We rose, and stole gently out of the room; the instant we found ourselves in the wood we flew with incredible swiftness, and in a few minutes arrived at the convent. The porter, who was just fastening the gate, let us in, and for a small present, promised inviolable secrecy; thus, gold, sometimes—

Can tempt the sternest sanctity to sin.

We retired to our chamber to ruminate on the adventure at the old convent—and the robber, for such we concluded the stranger to have been, occupied my thoughts the whole night

Neither Belinda or myself enjoyed a moment's repose; we talked of the affair 'till day-break, and agreed that we would, on the following evening, venture

venture forth again, at an earlier hour, with the sexton of the convent, to discover the hidden treasure, knowing that, during the day, the person who had deposited it would not be so daring as to attempt seeking for his plunder.

Adieu, for the present, my next letter shall tell you the result of our researches. I know you will congratulate me on the escape we have had : for there cannot be a doubt but that we should have been murdered, had the moon discovered our hiding-place.

Once more adieu, believe me sincerely,

Your friend,

LAURA FITZ-OWEN.

LETTER

LETTER XI.

SIR FRANCIS COLVILLE,

TO EDWARD PERCIVAL.

Charleton Priory, May, 179-.

THREE months have elapsed and no letter from Edward Percival! Have you bibbed of the Lethean spring?—Are you fallen a victim to the jealousy of some, “fiery Tybalt?” Or, to cure some romantic passion, have you taken a cool leap into that capacious crucible, Vesuvius? If you are no more, “God rest your soul in heaven full merry:” for, at least it will be purified in passing through the burning lake!

I have been these ten days at Charleton Priory, on a visit to our ancient friend, Sir Harvey Wentworth. I believe I shall stay a month longer, and then I must return to Oxford, that

terrestrial Pandemonium of pedantry and profligacy!

We expect a large party this summer. Courtney arrived yesterday. I wonder Mrs. Percival could suffer her sentimental soul-guard to stray so far from home! I hope he has left his ridiculous refinement at Litchfield; for I shall certainly be tempted to make cartridges of his "Heroic Epistles," and *papillotes* of his "Love Elegies!" The affectation of tenderness, which he has lately adopted, is become perfectly absurd. He, "like mortals, never sleeps;" but frequently wanders all night in the forest, chaunting love ditties. Poor Cæsar, the honest old house-dog, will pine himself to a skeleton with jealousy, at the midnight howlings of the divine. When I rise at break of day, to enjoy the delights of the country, I find him sitting mournfully under some hollow oak, or faded

faded willow, while his scattered sonnets, whirling in sympathetic contact with the fallen leaves, create the most sublime confusion.—Adieu, my dear Percival: believe me, I begin to discover, that nothing can be more intolerable, than an old family mansion, in the Country. I am certain, that if Courtney continues to cherish his romantic ideas of knight errantry ;---and I have not some more amusing objects to contemplate, than our gothic host, and his steel-ribbed ancestors, fighting “all their battles o’er again,” upon canvass, I shall in time dwindle imperceptibly into something that will rival even the antediluvian curiosities of Sir Harvey’s Museum!

Adieu, my dear Percival, believe me,

Yours truly,

F. COLVILLE.

F 2

LETTER

LETTER XII.

SOPHIA CLEVELAND,

TO LAURA FITZ-OWEN.

Grosvenor-street, London, May, 179.

DEAR LAURA,

HAVE you seen your cousin Edward Percival? He has, I understand, been absent from England some months.— He intends to make a tour of France and Italy, and *en revenant*, to complete his journey by a pilgrimage to the shrine, which you embellish, to pay his *devoirs* to his *belle cousine*. Remember, he is very devout, where beauty is the image of his idolatry; therefore, see him veiled, I conjure you: recollect the precepts of your beloved Shakespeare, that,

“ The chariest maid is prodigal enough,

“ If she unmask her beauties to the moon!”

Forgive

Forgive me for the affectation of being an adviser ; but the few months that you passed beyond the walls of your convent, since your infancy, have scarcely been sufficient to arm your ingenuous soul against the treachery of a deceitful world. To-morrow morning Lady Cavil and I intend setting out for Charleton Priory, the delightful mansion of Sir Harvey Wentworth. It is situated in Berkshire. The house, which has stood the changes of the seasons for upwards of two centuries, exhibits its grey walls upon an extensive lawn ; protected on one side by hanging woods, which extend their luxurious vegetation for many miles along the banks of the river, while the northern aspect commands an extensive view of Oxfordshire, which is separated from Berkshire by the Thames.

There the enlightened Denham has
F 3 often

often retired from the splendour and profligacy of the Court, to converse with Nature, in all her romantic luxuriance! This beautiful stream, immortalized by poets of every age, has never been more accurately described than by him, who, when speaking of his own talents, thus exclaims:—

“ Oh! could I flow like thee, and make thy stream,
My great example, as it is my theme;
Tho’ deep, yet clear, tho’ silent, yet not dull,
Strong without rage, without o’er-flowing full.”

Never was there so perfect a description comprised in so short a space.

The romantic prospects from the Priory are terminated by a small pathway, which leads to the “ Village house of prayer,” rendering the whole landscape interesting and beautiful.

This place is a scene of perpetual delight and hospitality. Sir Harvey,
being

being a very old friend of my family, has invited lady Cavil, to oblige me (as he supposes) with her society for the remainder of the summer.

Adieu, dear Laura, I shall write to you again on my arrival at the Priory.

SOPHIA CLEVELAND.

LETTER

LETTER XIII.

LAURA FITZ OWEN,

TO SOPHIA CLEVELAND.

Lausanne, May, 1795.

MY DEAR SOPHIA,

My last letter must have excited your curiosity ; I will not therefore detain you long in suspense, but proceed to inform you, that on the evening following our alarm at the chapel, before sun-set, we repaired to that melancholy spot. We made Etienne, the sexton of the convent, accompany us ; and as he is a strong young Savoyard, we thought he might be able to defend us from any assault. We arrived at the outward arch ; I own the chilled blood began to forsake my cheek ; Belinda smiling, said, “ Now, who is the coward ? ” — “ You are right,” replied I, “ yet I am not apprehensive of

of meeting with any thing mortal here; but I know not why, a presentiment, the most unpleasant, chains my feet.” “Folly! folly!” cried Belinda, gently pulling my arm:—“Come, Etienne, you must lead the way: I hope you are not afraid;” “afraid---no,” returned he; “with God’s protection, I dare any thing; here, my young ladies, take each hold of my arm, and be assured, I will defend you against whatever this place will produce.”

We proceeded, fearful, yet impatient, to satisfy our curiosity. The sun just setting in the horizon; the sky was beautifully serene; the trees were waving in soft murmurs around us, and the birds preparing to roost upon the branches; the insect millions were humming their evening song, and swarming from their little caverns, where they had sheltered themselves from a recent shower. Never did nature

ture appear so refreshed, or so perfectly enchanting!

We entered the chapel---“ Here,” said I, “ did the man deposit something;---what it was, heaven knows!” “ I see nothing,” said Etienne; “ but with this good pick-axe, I will dig to oblige you.”

He then began his task, and had not continued it two minutes, when he struck against a solid mass. “ We have it, by our Lady!” exclaimed Etienne, “ ’tis a heavy treasure, be it what it will, and perhaps may make a poor man’s fortune.” He continued to labour till (the earth being completely broken and removed) we discovered a large coffer, made of oak, and curiously carved, but much perished, by having remained a long time in the ground, though not more than a foot beneath the surface.

We

We all crowded round, and laughed immoderately, each asserting a right to a share of the treasure. "They do report, said our sexton, (leaning on his pick-axe,) "that this monastery was one of the richest in Switzerland; but when the emperor took it into his head to demolish his own convents, our massy ornaments vanished, nobody can tell how. Our abbess is his relation, and folks do say, that they travelled to Germany! yet who knows but they may find that they were mistaken." We all agreed that it could not be the deposit of the night robber, as no one person could have carried so ponderous a burthen. We continued our mirth. The sun was set, and the faint purple gloom, penetrating the shattered roof, rendered it almost

"Darkness visible."

"Come, come, Etienne," said I, "make haste, we will have it open at
any

any rate ; you have excited my curiosity, and I shall not rest till it is gratified."

He then placed his pick-axe in the crevice of the lid ; and (the wood being softened by the length of time it had been buried) with very little difficulty he forced it open.

Gracious heaven ! (my blood almost congeals whilst I write !) conceive our horror, when we beheld—the remains of a female form, wrapped in fine linen, with a gold chain and cross about the neck, and a wedding ring on one of the fingers. We looked at each other, as pale as alabaster. It was impossible to trace whether the person had been young or old ; but noble it certainly had been, by the richness of its burial garments. We continued to gaze in dumb astonishment ; Belinda was as cold as marble ; our poor sexton rested

rested on his pick-axe, in mournful silence; I confess I had much, very much, difficulty to save myself from fainting.

“Alas!” said Etienne, at length recovering from his surprise, “This must be the poor lady who died by her own rash hands, many years ago in our convent; my father was then sexton; and I remember his telling me the melancholy story, and his saying that he had, (by order of the superior) at midnight, hid her corps in a secret spot, to prevent the exposure and rigour exercised on the remains of those who commit self-slaughter. The story,” added he, “has been hushed up ever since, for many reasons; but murder will out, as they say! We had better cover the coffer, and lay the earth over it; and to-morrow I will come, and secure it in a manner, that nothing for the future shall disturb

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turb it." I found some relief from the coolness of the evening air, and sat myself down on a broken column, near the entrance, to recover my spirits—it was almost dark:—"Yes," said I, "do conceal those poor remains ; and to-morrow we will come and see how you have performed your promise." In a few minutes he replaced the earth, and we rose to depart. "I may as well leave my pickaxe and shovel," said Etienne---"Stay, stay, young ladies, only a moment, while I find a place to hide them in." He crept into a niche for that purpose—but what was our surprise when he, almost instantly, came running towards us, with a small red box, neatly decorated, and marked with the initials E. P. "This," said I, "is certainly the treasure which the robber hid last night ; we will take it to Madame St. Bruno, and she shall keep it, till

till some intelligence may restore it to the right owner."

We returned to the convent, impressed with a thousand melancholy sensations. I could not forbear shedding a torrent of tears. The poor Etienne looked like one "crazed with care," and my dear Belinda was perfectly stupified with wonder.

Adieu! what a long letter I have written! I will again resume my pen, the instant I can obtain further information on the subject of our adventures.

Yours ever,

LAURA FITZ-OWEN.

LETTER XIV.

EDWARD PERCIVAL,
TO SIR FRANCIS COLVILLE.

Lausanne, May, 179--

HERE am I—in a miserable hovel!---
on a miserable pallet!---in a most miserable condition!---wounded---robbed---and almost murdered!---Last night, on entering the forest about two miles distant, we were attacked by three armed ruffians; and, like my friend Falstaff, “I received their seven points upon my target:” or, on what you will say is still more impenetrable, my head! But my surgeon has forbid me to write, until my precious life is pronounced to be in perfect safety. Adieu! “More shalt thou hear anon,”
from

EDWARD PERCIVAL.

LETTER

LETTER XV.

SOPHIA CLEVELAND,

TO LAURA FITZ-OWEN.

Charleton Priory, May, 179--.

MY DEAR LAURA,

YOUR account of the strange discovery at your chapel, made my heart thrill with horror! How can you seek after such melancholy adventures? Yet if you pursue your researches any further, pray let me have a minute detail of whatever happens; *en attendant*, I will communicate to you the events of our summer excursion. If I had the pencil of Hogarth, or Bunbury, to delineate the motley and grotesque inmates of Charleton Priory, I have so many originals, that I should not know which way to make the prominent figure on the canvass; however, I shall

G 3

try

try to describe them, and (though contrary to the rules of painting) begin with the darkest shade first; I therefore introduce the gentle Lady Cavil.

After the fatigue of packing and unpacking fifty times, we departed from Grosvenor-street in her post-chaise, so buried among bundles, band-boxes, and lap dogs, that I was frequently in fear of absolute suffocation; believe me, I envied even the servant, who rode post; and the Bristol waggon (which we passed on the road) seemed more delightful than the triumphal car of Cleopatra, when compared with our moving machine of misery and mortification. I rejoiced when I beheld the sun kindly sinking behind the hill, as if unwilling to witness our disgraceful debarkation at the Priory. We arrived in the evening, and I was received by Sir Hervey Wentworth, as by a father. To Lady Cavil,

Cavil, he was politely attentive, though I could perceive in his countenance evident signs of disappointment at the eccentric appearance of *ma belle chaperone*! After the ceremonials of introduction between Lady Cavil and the respectable Sir Hervey were finished, we proceeded to the drawing-room, (for he had, according to the ancient rules of hospitality, greeted us in his old fashioned hall, hung round with tattered banners, rustling at every breath of wind, and waving over the rusty armour, and venerable stags heads, whose branching horns, regularly arranged, bespoke the pride and antiquity of the family.) Had you seen Sir Hervey handing Lady Cavil, at arm's length, by the point of her little finger, up the great stair-case, and through the long gallery ; had you beheld his neat figure, his taper legs, on which his glossy silk hose were drawn considerably

considerably above his trembling knees ; his high-heeled, short-quartered, shammy shoes, curiously fastened on his instep with small gold buckles, looking as if he had just awoke from a nap, commenced in the reign of good Queen Anne ! you would scarcely have been able to refrain from laughing. Though my face had no opportunity of smiling, it was completely occupied in blushing, for my clamorous companion, whose trumpet-toned voice (echoing along the vaulted ceiling of the great hall,) made me almost fancy that the “ complete steel” of the Wentworth’s, borne by the airy forms of their possessors, would, mistaking it for the Herald’s summons, instantly descend, and form themselves for battle ! Having conducted them so far, I shall leave you, my dear Laura, to contemplate with your “ mind’s eye” those scenes, which
(to

(to my great mortification) I witnessed
in reality.

Affectionately your's,

SOPHIA CLEVELAND.

LETTER

LETTER XVI.

LAURA FITZ OWEN,
TO SOPHIA CLEVELAND.

Lausanne, May, 179--.

MY DEAR SOPHIA,

BEFORE the sun rose, we quitted our pillows, where we had enjoyed little rest ; and at the conclusion of Matins, we ventured forth ; (it was an holiday, and therefore we were permitted to be absent ;) Etienne was waiting in the gate-way to attend us. . We proceeded to the old chapel. On our arrival at the melancholy spot, we perceived the earth removed. I was preparing to express my astonishment, when Etienne said, “ I left the coffer in this state, that you might examine it once more, if you wished it ; and likewise, that you may be satisfied that all the valuables remain perfectly safe: for,

continued

continued this honest fellow, "you don't know what treasure it contained; curiosity led me to look again this morning, and I found, to my great surprise, a golden box, which you shall see." We then removed the cover, and on the left side lay a richly embossed casket. We stood for a moment consulting each other's looks; at length Belinda expressed an earnest wish to examine its contents. Etienne desired me to uncloset it; I hesitated;---then, trembling, directed my hand towards it; as I touched the arm, it instantly mouldered to ashes! I started back, ready to expire with horror! "Etienne," said I, "do you take it out, for I have not the power." He took the casket in his hand; I felt the cold blood shiver at my heart. "Open it," said I, trembling. He did—but with a degree of respectful awe, that made me almost worship him. It contained a small lock of hair, curiously braided;
an

an enamelled miniature picture, of a young and handsome man, and a paper, with these words written upon it :

“ WHOEVER SHALL DISCOVER THESE MOURNFUL RELICS, IS DESIRED TO PRESERVE THEM TILL TIME SHALL DEVELOPE THE DREADFUL HISTORY OF THEIR ONCE HAPPY POSSESSOR,

BERTHA, COUNTESS OF —.”

My heart throbbed as though it would burst its prison ; in vain did I endeavour to speak ; I expected nothing less than instant annihilation ; in a few moments I recovered sufficiently to take the casket, and pressing it to my quivering lips, with holy veneration, secretly vowed to obey the injunctions it contained. We then covered the coffer ; every shovel full of dust that our sexton threw over it, drew a torrent from my eyes ; while he was performing this sad office, the
convent

convent bell, struck nine ; it seemed like the passing knell of the ill-fated BERTHA !

I knelt beside the spot till the earth was levelled with the other parts of the ground, and then assisted Etienne in piling a quantity of fragments of stone, forming a rude monument, over which I have every day since uttered a thousand *orisons*.

I believe I should have remained there till midnight, had not Belinda checked, what she called, my "ridiculous sensibility." I confess I did not suppose her capable of making such a remark ; and could not help replying, "You are at liberty, if the scene is unpleasant to you." She took me at my word, and left me under the protection of the honest Etienne. "'Tis very strange," said he, sighing. I made no reply, but sighed responsively.—"Let us depart," said he.

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We proceeded towards the convent, before we arrived at the gate, I could not help offering my humane companion the little money I had about me, which he firmly refused to accept.—“Do you think,” said he, “that I require a reward for doing what is right? No, no, Mademoiselle Laura; I am not so poor, that I must be paid for being honest.” Accept it then,” said I, “*Pour l’Amitie.*” “There again I must refuse you,” said Etienne, “for your friendship is not so changeable, but that it will last till another day; therefore you must excuse me for not receiving an earthly reward for the little step conscience may whisper I have made towards heaven.” I could not but admire his honest simplicity.

On my arrival at the convent, I found a letter from Mrs. Percival, whose son was (as you will perceive) robbed

robbed and wounded by banditti two nights since. He is lodged at a farmhouse, about a mile from hence. The trunk, marked with the initials, E. P. which we found where the robber had concealed it, evidently belonged to him; and Madame St. Bruno immediately sent it, with every offer of civility. She has dispatched a messenger to Geneva for a surgeon, for he is much hurt; but as soon as he is sufficiently recovered, I have leave (with *Pere Leonard*,) to make him a visit. I hope my cousin is not so very handsome as you represent him to be. I shall dread to know him, being shut up from all mankind, except our ghastly looking confessor.

Belinda is expiring to see this formidable *Anglois*; and I have promised to take her with me; but as we shall be guarded, there will be no great

danger of any very interesting conversation.

Adieu!

Yours sincerely,

LAURA FITZ-OWEN.

LETTER

LETTER XVII.

SOPHIA CLEVELAND,

TO LAURA FITZ-OWEN.

Charleton Priory, June, 179--.

I HAVE just received your letter, my dearest Laura, mentioning Mr. Percival's accident. Was it very astonishing, that, in approaching you, he was wounded?

But what a happy condensity of skull your charming cousin must be blest with. Had the blows, which he providently sustained on his head, fallen on any part of his body, instant annihilation would have been the inevitable consequence. The fashionable world would have been a scene of weeping and lamentation; for Edward is, though newly presented, the very idol of the female throng; for

H 3

which

which reason, in the true spirit of contradiction, he flies, merely for the pleasure of enjoying their misery.

I am informed that Mrs. Percival was very much alarmed at the intelligence, as she intends to give a *fete villageoise*, in the course of the ensuing month, which must have been postponed if her son had been killed.

It was reported that she intended to have abandoned the opening of her friend Lady Littlefigure's faro bank, (the evening the news arrived) had not her milliner entered at the same time, with a *bonnet à l'effendi*, which, I am sorry to add, entirely upset her project of sympathetic seclusion.

But to return to your favourite subject---is Edward Percival out of danger? has he proper attendance? Suffer

Madame

Madame St. Bruno to be his physician, but don't see him yourself. Such a nurse as Laura Fitz-Owen would, I fear, while eradicating a temporary disease, implant one in the heart of her patient, which "Nor time, nor place, nor lengthening years can cure."

Once more, then, I conjure you not to see him.

Yours, my dear Laura,

Very sincerely,

SOPHIA CLEVELAND.

LETTER

LETTER XVIII.

SIMON GALLIARD,

TO MONSIEUR DE VILLECOURT.

Litchfield Abbey, June, 1797.

MOUNSEER VILECUR,

KNOWING as you be Mister Percival's Valley de Sham, and thinking as your French ways dont at all agree with our English Constitution, I does you the honour to write you these few lines, in my officious capacity, as the Honourable Mrs. Percival's steward, my good lady having heard that her son, your master, has had an incident, which, she has been reformed, is a discussion on the brain, in order to prove her defection, she desires me to disclose the sum of forty pounds as a small present: and if it should please heaven to take the poor young gentleman from this wicked world to the other, she demands

mands me to intimidate, that no expence shall be spared to prove, that she possesses a failing and malevolent heart.

I suppose, Mounseer Vilecur, you be taking your pleasure, and that you be junketing about rarely, from place to place, levelling in luxury and laziness; but it is the way with ye all, now-a-days; but as I am overstepping my capacity of my Lady's steward, I must beg leave to incline making any remarks consarning the business. I remain, Mounseer,

Your humble servant,

SIMON GALLIARD.

P. S. My lady wood write herself, but she has been refined in her chamber for these six weeks, with her old flying goat.

LETTER

LETTER XIX.

LAURA FITZ-OWEN,
TO SOPHIA CLEVELAND.

Lausanne, June, 1790.

OH! my dear Sophia, I have seen and conversed with my amiable Cousin !--- I confess that all your accounts of his personal and mental accomplishments, fall far short of his merit. He is indeed astonishingly handsome, and so interesting, so well bred, so unassuming. I am really surprised that you suffered him to leave England.

How dearly Mrs. Percival ought to love such a son; how much all his friends must lament his absence; how universally will he be adored at Naples. He is quite recovered: his wound was not dangerous; and he means

means to proceed on his *tour* in two or three days.

I wished he had never visited Lausanne. Those superior beings make such solitary wretches as myself behold the world with eyes not wholly indifferent ; and when we turn to contemplate our monastic obscurity, we cannot help making such comparisons as produce disquietude. I hate the sight of old *Pere Leonard*, since I beheld *Edward Percival*, and can scarcely believe that I am not dreaming when I compare their figures. Happy ! happy *Sophia* ! Do you not sometimes commiserate my mournful destiny ? Do you not wish to see me at liberty ? But what has a wretched friendless orphan to do with the busy world ? Why should I pine for the turmoil of life ? I have no right to covet splendour : I was not born to dazzle admiring eyes, or triumph over the hearts of surrounding slaves :

slaves : to you, my dear Sophia, I resign the laurel of conquest, and must endeavour to remember that,

“ Here for ever, ever must I stay ! ”

I am grown more fond of my solitary retreat than ever ; I pass much of my time there : yesterday evening I had courage to visit it quite alone. The timidity I had felt on former occasions seemed wholly vanished ; I experienced a perfect serenity of mind, and my sense of dread was subdued by the tranquility around me. My soul glowed with poetical inspiration, I enjoyed a melancholy solace, more gratifying to my mind than the liveliest scenes could have bestowed. So pure, so superior was my delight, that though the clouds threatened a storm, no power on earth could have prevented me even from encountering its impending fury.

With

With my pencil I wrote the inclosed
verses in my pocket-book :

STANZAS WRITTEN AT THE SHRINE OF BERTHA.*

Pleas'd with the calm bewitching hour,
When Evening shadows o'er the plain ;
I seek my solitary bow'r,
And listen to the night-owl's strain !

Here, where the woven ivy hangs,
Once the rich shrine of marble rose !
And chaste-ey'd VESTALS sigh'd their pangs,
And bath'd, with icy tears their woes.

And here, where on the rugged ground
The sculptured fragments scatter'd lie,
Erst did the choral anthem sound,
And holy incense meet the sky.

What are ye now ? ye arches drear,
What can ye shew to sooth the breast ?
Save pensive twilight's frequent tear,
That falls in crystal lustre drest !

Yet o'er the scene of rude decay,
Blithe nature darts the morning beam !
And here the blushing evening ray
Inspires the soul with FANCY's dream !

*The Authoress is indebted to her Mother for all the Poetry
in these volumes *not* marked with inverted commas.

And here wan CYNTHIA sheds her light,
The shatter'd roofs and walls among;
And here the solemn hour of night
Is chear'd by PHILOMELA's song!

And here the PILGRIM, poor and sad,
No kindred smile his breast to warm,
May find, what cruel foes forbad,
A shelter from the howling storm!

Blow, blow ye keen, ye ruthless winds;
Ye livid lightnings dart around!
While terror freezes guilty minds,
And conscience owns the cureless wound.

Here can I view, unchill'd with dread,
The lofty aisle and shad'wy dome;
The turrets, tottering o'er the dead;
The long-drawn monumental gloom!

Where, still, without one holy rite,
The hapless BERTHA's form shall sleep!
While blushing rigour shrinks from light,
And MELANCHOLY, hides—to weep.

With SUPERSTITION gliding round,
A thousand ghastly shades shall gleam;
While o'er the dew besprinkled ground
Steals the faint MOON's retiring beam!

Yet

Yet, hither shall the RED-BREAST bring,
The lilly, and the palest rose:
And all the fairest flow'rs of spring,
To dress her bed——of long repose.

Oh! gentle BIRD! no wand'rer rude
Shall bid thee from these ruins flee;
Blest mistrel of this solitude!
Still shalt thou sing——TO SOLACE ME.

I had scarcely finished these stanzas, when Miss Warton came hastily toward the chapel, and informed me, that Mr. Percival had just sent word to Madame St. Bruno, that he should do himself "the honour" of waiting on her in half an hour, to take leave, as it was his intention to depart at day-break for Italy. I was sorry to hear this intelligence: a strange, foolish palpitation of my heart made me blush when I turned my eyes towards the farm house where he had lodged ever since he received his wound. Belinda was lavish of her praises; she spoke with delight of his handsome person,

and still more rapturously of his graceful manners. For the first time in my life, I was really displeased with her : I had not power to confess the justice of her panegyric : something like shame chained my tongue ; yet why I know not, for heaven can bear witness to the innocence of my heart.

At nine o'clock he came ; he bowed respectfully to Madame St. Bruno, on entering our *Parloir*, but his eyes were instantly fixed on me so steadfastly, and with such a mournful expression, that I knew not how to conceal my confusion. His forehead still retained the scar left by his barbarous assailants. I confess that a tear obtruded on my sight, when I recollected the extreme danger he had escaped. Surely the tenderness of pity does not merit reprehension.

After all the common-place compliments used on such occasions, he retired

tired towards the door ; I think, reluctantly. His air was pensive and melancholy, his voice inarticulate ; he was barely polite to Madame St. Bruno, even rudely inattentive to Belinda---but to me---alas!---I dare not describe his manner ; it was all fascinating, gratifying, dangerous, and impressive---his eyes betrayed a million sensations, which language never could have revealed. He stood for a moment as if trying to recollect something ; then, recovering from his reverie, darted across the court-yard : Madame St. Bruno, (who is the best bred woman in the world,) accompanied him to the outward gate, which had a strong heavy bolt ; Mr. Percival endeavoured to open it ; I involuntarily stepped forward to assist him ; as I directed my hand towards the door---he pressed it eagerly,---I no longer saw my companions,---the world receded from my eyes, and I was only

awakened from my stupor by the thundering noise of the great gate--- Shut---between me and the most amiable of beings---perhaps---for ever!

Yesterday, Madame St. Bruno hinted, that my sojourn in this melancholy habitation would probably be perpetual. Estranged from society from my earliest childhood, the seclusion of a religious life has hitherto presented no terror, created no mournful repining in my bosom. The awful impressions of monastic superstition were succeeded by a total apathy; while the lofty walls of my prison formed the boundary of my wishes. It is now, alas! for the first time, that my heart acknowledges the attractions of a world, which I am destined to renounce for ever!

Mr. Percival said something about writing to us. I imperfectly recollect the

the promise, and hope---he will not forget it, for the remembrance of an amiable mind is consoling even to the lonely inhabitants of perpetual solitude. Perpetual! that word has something in it which freezes my bosom.

I wish Belinda would never mention his name.

Adieu, my dear Sophia,

Ever sincerely yours,

LAURA FITZ-OWEN.

LETTER.

LETTER XX.

EDWARD PERCIVAL,

TO SIR FRANCIS COLVILLE.

Geneva, June, 1790.

EDWARD'S "himself again!" I have been confined with a wounded head for some days past, in the neighbourhood of Lausanne, but I am now flying post with a worse malady, a wounded heart!

Tell me not of Waller's Saccharissa, Prior's Chloe, or Petrarch's Laura! Tell me not of *La belle Gabrielle*, or the rose-lip'd Rosamond! Mine is the only *Rosa Mundi*! Mine is alone "the true Arabian bird!" There is nothing upon earth handsome except Laura Fitz-Owen!—All other women appear like dragons, harpies, and basilisks,

lisks, when I think of my Laura! I saw this lovely mortal, for the first time, in the presence of Madame St. Bruno, (who is every thing that is amiable and respectable,) and a Miss Warton. My adorable cousin is all grace, sensibility, and diffidence; of the most nymph-like form, with a countenance which seems the expressive herald of her spotless mind. But methinks I hear you say, "Cease thy ravings, and describe, friend Edward, describe." Know then, she is tall, exquisitely formed; with a profusion of beautiful auburn hair; her eyes, I think I now see them, lustrous as the sapphire, but of the darkest blue, with "fringed curtains," half concealing (as if in pity to weak mortals) the shafts that lurk beneath them! Her nose more beautiful than that of the Parian Venus; her mouth a cabinet of orient pearls, breathing odours, and adorned with "dimpled smiles."—Oh---Colville!

ville! my description would make a *folio*, she has such an inexhaustible store of beauty!

I shall find little difficulty in giving a very exact picture of her conceited companion, Miss Warton: I need only say that she is the contrast of Laura Fitz-Owen; a very moppet, composed of languishing leers, sighs, oglings, and affected innocence. Laura seems delighted with her conversation, of which I was not permitted to judge; for the sweet, mysterious damsel, with her head reclining upon her shoulder, and the most singularly expressive stare I ever saw innocence exhibit, observed the most sentimental silence during the whole time that I remained in her society. What a blessed perfection will her taciturnity prove to the happy man who "takes her hand, and calls her wife."

But

But I must fly from the enchanting Laura, I must, I will forget this phoenix. A mist seems to hang over the face of nature, since I have lost sight of the grey battlements of Laura's convent: after gazing on the sun, every object seems dim and vapid.

I write this while my thrice night-capped postillion is lighting his pipe and stepping into his boots: he advised me to sleep here, but I told him, that

"I must be gone and live, or stay and die!"

The emphatic manner in which I pronounced this quotation from our divine bard, led him to believe (for to my honest conductor I might have spoken Greek with equal success) that I was offended at his counsel, for, shrugging up his shoulders, and mounting his *rossinante*, he said, "*Allons Monsieur comme il vous plaira*," then turning to the bowing Boniface at the door,

door, continued, "*ces diables des Anglois ne sont jamais contents!*" I could not help acquiescing in his opinion.

But why am I trifling thus? Am I not flying from—I dare not return to a subject which I ought to—I must forget.

Farewell,

Yours truly,

EDWARD PERCIVAL.

LETTER

LETTER XXI.

LAURA FITZ-OWEN,
TO SOPHIA CLEVELAND.

Lausanne, June 179-.

YOUR letter of kind advice arrived too late ; I had seen my amiable cousin, and, alas!—taken, perhaps, my final leave of him.

He is now in Italy, admiring and admired. The women of that country are, I am told, exquisitely handsome ; I am sorry for it : yet why should their beauty interest me ? Why should I fear their being lovely in the eyes of Mr. Percival ? But I cannot help writing to you all I feel, all I hope, all I dread !

He has been gone three days, and
Madame St. Bruno has not yet heard

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from

from him. He begged her permission to write, and to communicate the progress of his journey.

Madame St. Bruno is a woman of noble family ;---her relatives reside at Vienna, where they hold the highest situations about the Court. Her life of celibacy is the result of choice : she was early in youth betrothed to an officer of great merit, and illustrious extraction ; he was a native of France, and killed in the German wars. Madame St. Bruno, to avoid a marriage proposed by her parents, determined to fly for refuge to monastic tranquillity. At the age of twenty-five she took the veil, and has by progressive steps arrived at the honour of being Abbess of our convent. She has none of the pedantry of devotion, though every action bespeaks the most conscientious rectitude, and by her unaffected polished manners, you would suppose her

her still the most brilliant ornament of the gayest court in Europe.

I have covered the rude resting place of my dear Bertha with turf and moss, and planted round it all the sweetest flowers that this climate produces: there do I every evening, at sun set, weep over my rosary, and pour forth a thousand orisons for the soul of its mouldering inhabitant.

No news yet from Edward Percival!

Adieu, dear Sophia,

Yours ever most truly,

LAURA FITZ-OWEN.

LETTER XXII.

EDWARD PERCIVAL,

TO SIR FRANCIS COLVILLE.

Milan, June 179--.

AFTER leaving the convent, and my charming Laura, I little cared what became of me. The most unaccountable apathy seized all my faculties, and I began to think that there was witchcraft in the very climate! I wrote you a few lines from Geneva, and then threw myself into my carriage, most perfectly at the mercy of my growling postillion—equally indifferent whether I was travelling to the gay regions of melodious Italy, or hastening to destruction, amidst the eternal snows of Mont Blanc! With this torpor, or fascination, or apathy, or whatever you please to call it, I pursued my journey,

journey, 'till I arrived within a few miles of the Alps.

“ *Sacre bleu !*” was the pious ejaculation that awakened me from my reverie, just in time to experience the uncomfortable sensation of my carriage oversetting at the bottom of a most tremendous mountain. “ *Hallo !*” cried I,—“ *Par-di, vous pouviez bien crier Hola,*” answered my astonished guide, while he lay rolling on the ground, with his three night-caps fallen from his head, and his legs in a perpendicular direction. “ *Ma foi Monsieur, vous est si impatient !*” “ *Impatient, Bete,*” exclaimed I ; “ have I not had the forbearance of a saint, to sit here at your mercy ? and am I not likely to remain here all night, owing to my reliance on you ? ”—“ *Monsieur, est encore fache contre moi ?*” still laying on the ground, “ *attendez attendez, tout ira bien dans un instant ;*”

yet I perceived no chance of any effort on his part ; therefore I began to unfasten the harness, or rather the cordage, that enthralled the miserable animals. At length, with some difficulty, my intoxicated, and *only* companion, (for my servant was gone forward to order fresh horses), quitted his horizontal position, and after disengaging himself from his enormous boots, set down quietly on a bank to regale himself with a pinch of snuff ; then, gathering up the fragments of his broken pipe, he exclaimed, with a significant shrug, "*Patience!*" All this time my carriage lay with the floor towards the sky ! Night approached, and we had yet a stupendous mountain to pass over. I could, with infinite satisfaction, have demolished the lean, lazy varlet, who, with all the *sang froid* imaginable, drawing out his smoking apparatus, began to replenish the miserable remnant of his pipe, which

which had escaped the catastrophe. Thus, almost driven to despair, and seeing no prospect of repose for that night, I was suddenly relieved by the sight of an English post-chaise ; and, to my great joy, I instantly recognized my old acquaintance, Sir Robert Littleworth. Never was the saying, that “ a friend in need is a friend indeed ! ” more completely verified than in the present instance. My guide now became wonderfully diligent, and on seeing me open the door of Sir Robert’s chaise, exclaimed, with infinite consternation, “ *et moi Monsieur !* ” — By this time Sir Robert’s servants, and the two postillions who drove him, had replaced my shattered conveyance on its proper equilibrium. “ *Allon’s Monsieur, tout est pret !* ” said he, with the most zealous alacrity. — “ No, no, *Mon ami,* ” answered I, “ you may follow at your leisure ; I shall proceed with this gentleman.”

My

My servant, surprised at our delay, now came hastening towards us. I committed my chaise and luggage to his care, and pursued my route with Sir Robert.

We found it impossible to travel many leagues that night; the road was as rugged as a stone quarry; and, though the post-house was scarcely four miles distant, we were more than two hours in reaching it.

It was near midnight when we arrived. A flaming hearth, *bon vin*, and a pretty *paysanne* for our attendant, were fascinations too powerful for Littleworth to withstand. "Percival," said he, "We lodge here this night by all that's delicious." I was not sorry to hear the proposition, when I recollected my recent misfortune.

In a few minutes Nannette spread a
clean

clean coarse cloth, over a board, which she called a table, and which she luxuriously decorated with a smoking *poularde*, an *omelet*, and a most exquisite sallad! To these she added a bottle of good Burgundy, and another of *petit Vin Bourdeaux*.

I believe, had not the convent been imprinted on my shattered brain, I should have made a most delightful meal! Nannette was as pretty as a neat dapper figure, a clear dark complexion, fine teeth, and two dazzling black eyes could make her! But she had none of the vivacity so peculiar to her countrywomen. "What is the matter, Nannette," said Littleworth, "that you look so sad?—Have you lost your love?" "*Oui, Monsieur*; he is gone to Florence, to live with a young Italian marquis, and I fear I shall never see him again," said she, with

with a sigh, that would have kindled a flame in a bosom of adamant.

“ Will you go with me, and seek him ?” resumed Littleworth.—

“ *Avec plaisir, Monsieur* ; for I have no reason to remain here any longer ; my mother died three days since, and my father-in-law is very unkind to me ; he is more out of humour than ever, on account of the accident which happened while he was driving you this evening ; but I hope you are not angry,” darting her fine sparkling eyes upon me. Had I not so recently left Laura Fitz-Owen, I will honestly confess I should have felt their brilliancy, which was not lost upon Sir Robert, who made ample amends for my apparent apathy.

Nannette told us all her history ; and an interesting one it was, as far as penury

penury and simplicity could make it. "She shall go with us, by Jupiter," said Littleworth; "the embellishments of fashion will render her *tres piquante*; and I shall swear, on my return to England, that she is a Swiss *marquise*, who has left an illustrious family to follow my fortune." "Yes, and to make her own," said I, gravely.

"Will you go Nannette?" continued I, "and leave your poor father without a companion?" "*Ab! mon Dieu, non,*" replied she hastily; while a torrent of tears evinced the tenderness of her heart.

Poor Nannette! if some of our courtly dames had half her sensibility, and simplicity of soul, the veriest libertine would become their proselyte; and the eloquence of feeling would

would triumph over the most unprincipled opinions.

Sir Robert, on the following day, with great reluctance, relinquished his plan of taking Nannette with him. As we stepped into the carriage, after at least a dozen "*bon voyages*," with the most perfect *naivete*,—" *Messieurs*," said she, "when you arrive at Florence, have the goodness tell Pierre Mortange, that Nannette is alive, and as constant as ever—that she waits for his return with impatience, and thinks of nothing but him all the day long."

The postillion, with his vile clacking whip, prevented my saying, "Sweet simple offspring of nature! how shall I find thy Pierre Mortange, in such a city as Florence?"

The interruption was, perhaps, a fortunate one; for there are situations,

ons, in which, to enlighten the mind,
is to render it wretched.

On we went ; Sir Robert as thought-
less as ever ; and your friend Edward,
“ *triste comme un bonnet de nuit !* ”

Apropos—I suppose by this time
you are dozing over my long letter ;
therefore I conclude it, by wishing
you the most agreeable *reveries*.

Bon Soir,

EDWARD PERCIVAL.

LETTER XXIII.

SIR FRANCIS COLVILLE,

TO EDWARD PERCIVAL.

Charleton Priory, June 179..

“SHE comes! and blessed are the deaf!” Whither shall I fly from that screaming pea-hen, Lady Cavil? A few evenings since, before I returned from Windsor, where I had dined, she arrived, with her moveable masquerade warehouse. This woman haunts me like “the foul fiend!” I don’t know which is the most tiresome, the *boïstrous tendresse* of Lady Cavil, or the romantic rage which Courtney has taken for Sophia Cleveland, her *Eleve*, who is really a very pretty good humoured little girl, and will have a large fortune; but while she is guarded by that desperate dragon, I fear she

she is in danger of signing Spinster for some time to come.

As Lady Cavil stays here for the remainder of the summer, my sojourn will not be of long duration.

Our prospect is rather less dreary than it was, on account of the arrival of Lord and Lady Moreland and Miss Winterton. The Peer is a perfect *Lord Ogleby*—married to the daughter of a rich merchant in Crutched-friars—a woman who did not require the recommendation of fifty thousand pounds, to render her truly fascinating. She really is deserving of a more amiable companion, than her green-eyed monster of an husband. Do not suppose, by my admiration of the wife, and unfavourable, though just, character of her lively lord, that I have entrusted my liberty to the blind urchin whom you obey; at least, if I

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have,

have, Lady Moreland is not the object of my passion.

Alas! who can behold Miss Lucretia Winterton with indifference? Of whose majestic and most unpliant form, 'tis impossible to give you a more perfect idea, than by referring you to Hogarth's admirable picture of Morning, with the old maid going to church! Now for a description of my heroine—she too is “tall,” resembling a maypole in every thing, except its blooming appendages! She too has “a profusion of beautiful hair,” which I dare say she will exhibit—when she unpacks her luggage! Her eyes are also like gems; but I am rather afraid they incline more to the emerald than the sapphire! She has the bloom of Hebe! but it has unfortunately mistaken its natural residence, and fixed upon her nose, instead of her cheek!

Nothing

Nothing can be more striking than the contrast between this formal fascinating maiden of fifty-five, and Lady Cavil; though they have only been acquainted since the arrival of the former at the Priory, they already entertain the most marked hatred for each other.

Lady Cavil always proposes *Casino* on Sunday evenings! when Miss Lucretia is immediately seized with her symptomatic restlessness, and, rising from her chair, generally takes a book, to avoid being requested to participate in, what she calls, "profane amusement." While the tables are preparing, deep groans, and contemptuous glances, introduce the prelude to our entertainment; and finally, when the cards are opened, she darts out of the room, saying at the door, "I shall quit this mansion of abomination, while I am safe;" and after ordering

her chaise to be got ready, and her shawl and calash to be fetched, is, not without many entreaties on the part of Sir Hervey, persuaded to return and amuse herself with knotting or cutting paper, 'till supper is announced; immediately after which, Lady Cavil proposes a glee, as Lady Moreland and Sophia sing remarkably well. This generally drives the lovely Lucretia into a fit of frenzy, 'till Courtney soothes her, by declaring, for she is extremely deaf, that we are chaunting the loyal chorus of "*God save the King,*" in which she imagines that she bears a part, while we are singing, "Come live with me, and be my love!"

But to banish this dry subject, for a more agreeable one, let me ask, and at the same time acquaint you that I expect to be informed with candour, who this amiable cousin is, that has so completely

completely fascinated your mind, as to inspire it with such fervent admiration? I confess I should be infinitely amused to see Edward Percival in love! for I think that must be, of all things in the world, the most ridiculous! though you are not the only Englishman who has departed from this country a perfect *Lothario*, and returned a complete *Benedict*.

Write to me very soon, and let me hear that you have got another broken head, for the Poet says,

"Misfortunes serve to make us wise."

Farewell! Your's,

F. COLVILLE.

LETTER

LETTER XXIV.

EDWARD PERCIVAL,

TO MADAME ST. BRUNO.

Verona, July 179--

MADAM,

TAKE the earliest opportunity to express my gratitude for the innumerable civilities which I experienced from you, and my lovely cousin, when my indulgent stars directed my feet towards your mansion of virtue and repose—where the revolving seasons are marked with the conscious delight of mental serenity!

Be assured, Madam, that while I am pursuing my journey, the most interesting objects glide unheeded before me, for my mind, absorbed, and my fancy delighted, hovers round the romantic pile of which you are the exemplary guardian.

I reflect with horror on the dreary mountains which I have passed, when I call to my remembrance the splendour of the varying and luxuriant landscape, which encircles Lausanne. Florence is a superb city—its fascinations are inconceivable! But I will not attempt to exert my feeble talent for description, to one who is herself blessed with every acquirement that courtly magnificence, or the majesty of mind, can bestow!

May I, my dear Madam, flatter myself with the hope, that you will employ your fair friend, Miss Fitz-Owen, for I dare not suppose that you would condescend to waste your precious moments in answering me, to acknowledge the receipt of my letter, and to give me favourable tidings of your health.

I shall, *de tems en tems*, intrude on
your

your goodness, and entreat that you will accept (with my most affectionate regard to my lovely cousin) the respectful *devoirs* of,

Madam,

Your very obedient,

Humble servant,

EDWARD PERCIVAL.

LETTER

LETTER XXV.

EDWARD PERCIVAL,

TO SIR FRANCIS COLVILLE.

Verona, July 179..

You tax me as formally as though you supposed that I were really in love. I assure you I cannot flatter myself with the idea that I possess so much virtue. You ask, "who, and what this amiable cousin is?" As to who she is, I can inform you no further, than that I was taught to understand, that I had a very beautiful, but distant relation, in a convent at Lausanne. What she is, my heart well knows, and I have before described! but take notice, I am yet free—I have no Lucretia Wintertons to seduce my senses. No——believe me I can laugh to scorn the menaces of your little blind monarch. But I will not expatiate on the
subject

subject at present—for “no disguise can conceal love, where it is; nor feign it, where it is not!” And in my opinion, where we cannot fight with honour to ourselves, there is some merit in making a creditable retreat.

Yours,

E. PERCIVAL.

LETTER

LETTER XXVI.

LAURA FITZ-OWEN,

TO SOPHIA CLEVELAND.

Lausanne, July, 179--.

A LETTER has at length arrived from Edward. He is at Florence, that gay and luxurious city. He will doubtless find infinite sources of amusement—such as will entirely obliterate from his memory the monastic shades in which I find little delight, except that which proceeds from ruminating on his perfections. Would to heaven I had never seen him. I should like to know how long he remains in Italy; and by what *route* he returns to England.

Belinda Warton is, I believe, more than half captivated by the graces of Mr. Percival! She talks of nothing

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else.

else. I wish that she would not torment me with her nonsensical partiality. This is the first instance in which I ever found her confidence unpleasant ; but it appears to me so childish, so ridiculous, to fall in love at first sight ; so like the heroine of a romance, and so opposite to the rules of good sense and reason, that I am almost angry with her for displaying such a symptom.

Amiable Edward ! my too charming cousin ! I have read his short letter an hundred times ; 'tis full of traits, characteristic of his polished mind. I hope he will write again soon, and wish that the laws of propriety would authorize my answering his letter ; but my respected monitress, Madame St. Bruno, says, I cannot so far overstep the bounds of decorum.

Has Lord Litchfield yet thought of
any

any alliance for his nephew? I suppose he looks forward to rank and fortune. I am sure he deserves every blessing that either can bestow.

I still pay my evening visits to the old chapel, which I have named the SHRINE OF BERTHA. A dear enchanting nightingale has built his nest near the spot, and there, at the approach of every twilight, "It's sad song mourneth well." The flowers I planted, spring up every day, and the ivy that hangs in woven clusters, extends its canopy to preserve their opening beauties.

You cannot imagine how many pleasing melancholy hours I pass at my favourite shrine. I fly thither the moment those allotted to study are elapsed, and employ the rest of the evening within the walls of my retreat. Belinda sometimes assists me in the

pious office of decorating the turf. We have entirely removed the fragments, and Etienne has heaped them in the form of a square, as a bulwark to guard its treasure from vulgar molestation. 'Tis astonishing to see how beautifully romantic the ruin is become, and how neatly we have arranged the lowly grave of the unfortunate Bertha. I have once solicited Madame St. Bruno to visit it, but she declined the invitation with a torrent of tears! I have entreated all the elder nuns, particularly Claudine Laval, my greatest favourite, to give me the history of her, whose remains interest me so deeply; but they say nothing more, than that she was a pensioner at the convent, and for some unknown reason destroyed herself by poison! She was wonderfully beautiful, young, and accomplished, of a melancholy disposition, delicate frame, and of a too sensible turn of mind.

I often

I often contemplate the miniature presented to me by Madame St. Bruno. Nobody here can tell whom it was intended to represent ; and probably that secret never will transpire.

Summer is now far advanced. I begin to reflect how I shall preserve my hallowed shrine from the blasts and fury of tempestuous skies. I shall grieve to relinquish my hours of meditation. I must contrive some method to enclose the spot 'till the next spring.

*" There shall the morn her earliest tears bestow,
" There the first roses of the year shall blow."*

How different are your occupations from mine ! While you are smiling in the brilliant assembly, I am chaunting holy songs—while you are fancying a masquerade dress, I am musing over the green sod, which conceals

M 3

the

the dust of the ill-fated Bertha!—
while

——“The sun with parting rays

“Gilds the long grass, that hides her silent bed!”

Alas! Sophia, I cannot restrain my
tears, when I reflect, that the form
which once possessed youth, beauty,
and sensibility, lies freezing beneath
my feet, in the long, long night of
oblivion!—What does it mean? What
is this sleep of death?

I shall write again in a post or two.

Adieu! dear Sophia. Believe me

Your very sincere and

affectionate friend,

LAURA FITZ-OWEN.

LETTER

LETTER XXVII.

HENRY COURTNEY,

TO EDWARD PERCIVAL.

Charlton Priory, July 1790.

SUSPEND thy propensity to ridicule, and listen, perhaps for the last time, to the despair of thy friend.

Yes, Edward, to my despair! but I do not repine, indeed I do not, I am proud of my chains, when I reflect how few are worthy to wear them, to wear them for Sophia Cleveland!

Talk not of Laura Fitz-Owen—she is an ethiope to my Sophia. Mine did I say? No, Edward—no, she is not my Sophia---Sir Francis Colville is the happy mortal for whom she wastes the midnight hour in tears. She is under the influence of Lady Cavil---he is rich!
he

he is noble! but he shall repent the hour, wherein he became the rival of Courtney.

Write to me soon---very soon, I conjure you. If I am yet among the "sons of men," I will answer thee--- If I am "food for worms," Colville can tell my story.

Farewell!

HENRY COURTNEY.

LETTER

LETTER XXVIII.

HENRY COURTNEY,

TO SOPHIA CLEVELAND.

MAY every event in life prove as favourable to your wishes, as that which is about to release you from the wretched being who is now addressing you. Do not, lovely Sophia, imagine that my soul, even in its distraction, can harbour a thought to your disadvantage: you are misguided by the persuasions of the most designing and artful of human beings. Sir Francis Colville is affluent, and you are under the influence of Lady Cavil. My death will release you from persecution.

It is now midnight: the clear moon, which in happier moments I have so often delighted to contemplate, hangs
over

over the silent scene in meek and awful splendour. The grey towers of the Priory, cast their long shadows across the path which leads to the sacred assylum, where I am perhaps destined to rest for ever! I have wandered to the rising plantation which faces your window, I have watched the faint light of the decaying embers which illumine your chamber. Sleep on, my Sophia, to dream of joy; and if a sigh for me should steal through thy gentle bosom, repress not the tribute, to him, who, in a few hours may sleep, to wake no more!

Keep this letter—and when I am mouldering in my “long and last abode,” if your eyes should glance over its contents, reflect on the obedient submission, and unfortunate passion, of

HENRY COURTNEY.

LETTER

LETTER XXIX.

SIR FRANCIS COLVILLE,

TO EDWARD PERCIVAL.

Charleton Priory, May, 1790.

THE most ridiculous adventure has occurred that ever embellished the annals of chivalry.

Yesterday morning, ere I had risen from my pillow, I received a challenge from the meek, the sentimental Courtney. When I had recovered from my astonishment at so strange and unexpected a breakfast, I enquired for this enraged Hannibal. My servant informed me that Mr. Courtney had quitted the Priory at day-break, and was (he believed) gone to London; but that he had left the note for me, and a message, that he should return the next morning before seven o'clock.

After

After hesitating for some moments, whether I should treat the business as a *badinage*, or sit down seriously to settle my worldly affairs, I determined, like a reasonable fellow, to await his arrival, and demand an explanation of his mysterious conduct.

At seven o'clock my formidable antagonist arrived, accompanied by one of those people who calmly retire to a respectful distance, and look on, while we are shot at, under the title of Friend!

On being informed of Courtney's arrival, I went to him immediately: at my approach his eyes flashed fire, and "each particular hair" seeming "to stand on end," he rose, and with a voice almost suffocated with rage, yet affecting great calmness, enquired if I had received his note, I answered in the affirmative, "Then, Sir," said he,
" words

“ words are superfluous ; I am ready to attend you.” I then asked him, “ if pens, pistols, or swords, were to be the instruments of destruction ?” I confess, Edward, I had not the smallest inclination to annihilate this sacred character. Vain were the efforts to tranquilize his perturbed spirit ; and as he was resolved to be pinked, or to receive the addition of an ounce of lead to his most romantic brain, I followed him ; we took our ground ; and as it was to indulge his caprice I went thither, I even requested him to take the first shot ; upon which his raving fit returned—he said that trifling with his despair was an additional insult. We then drew lots, and the honourable privilege of Man Slaughter devolved upon Mr. Courtney—he fired—and— I thank my stars, I am here to relate the adventure ! Upon receiving his shot, I discharged my pistol in the air.

When the danger was over our friends drew round us, as the dramatis Personæ arrange themselves in battle array at the end of an old comedy, each supposing himself the Hero of the piece.

I was, at the time that I ventured my precious existence, ignorant of the crime for which the world of fashion was to lose its brightest ornament.

I find that jealousy was the cause of Courtney's resentment, and of Sophia Cleveland, for whom I should as soon think of entering the lists as for the Corsican Fairy, or a Virginia Nightingale! No, no, Edward, the sentimental sublimity of Miss Cleveland is perfectly adapted to the grotesque gallantry of her despairing Courtney! to whom I beg leave to resign all my pretensions.

I expect

I expect to see, in all the newspapers, the most laughable account of our sanguinary rencontre.

“ Last week a duel was fought between Sir F—— C——, Bart. and the Rev. Mr. C——: After the usual ceremony of firing in the air had taken place, the affair was amicably adjusted, very much to the honour of both parties !”

We are not gothic enough to fight up to the knees in water, like those renowned heroes, Bruce and Sackville ; no, we polished youths of the eighteenth century find it quite sufficient to encounter one element at a time.

But hold—if I expatiate any further upon our dread exploit, the ballad of “ Chevy Chace” will become a mere

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ariette

ariette to the modern ditty of Courtney
and Colville!

Adieu.

Yours truly,

FRANCIS COLVILLE.

LETTER

LETTER XXX.

LAURA FITZ OWEN,
TO SOPHIA CLEVELAND.

Lausanne, July, 179-.

MY dearest friend, I now experience what I have often heard is the greatest delight this sublunary state bestows, the felicity of unbounded confidence, the soothing intercourse of friendship, nourished by time, and sanctioned by conviction. I begin to doubt the sincerity of Belinda Warton; I have no consolation left but that which I hope for in your sympathizing bosom.

You will from this melancholy preface expect some intelligence of importance to my happiness---Dare I open my palpitating heart?---Dare I reveal its inmost thoughts?---Dare I avow to the gay, the thoughtless Sophia, that

all its hopes, all its fears, all its sentiments throng round the image of Edward Percival.

Blame not my folly, persuade me not to relinquish the only idea that renders life supportable: there is a degree of satisfaction in thinking of him that surpasses all my ideas of felicity.

I have no motive for this confession, no hope of ever again beholding him; yet may I not be permitted to admire him in silence? and lament that fate which separates me from him, perhaps --- for ever! I shall never quit this solitude; I shall never behold the happy shores of Britain.

The seclusion in which I am condemned to slumber through the rest of my days, might have been marked with that torpid resignation which is nearly allied

allied to repose; but I have beheld Edward Percival, and every prospect of tranquility is vanished. I did not think that sorrow could pervade the gloom of a cloister, where all is tranquil.

Yet the mind which has been cultivated under the observing eye of Madame St. Bruno, cannot fall into an error; it cannot cherish an idle romantic passion, for a man who perhaps remembers not that such a wretched being exists.

I have examined my own heart, and dare trust its purity; I have ruminated in silence, and without a blush, on my attachment to the most amiable of men. The result of my researches is a full and dispassionate conviction that he is most worthy of my affections.

Affections! what am I writing? a solitary

solitary orphan, a stranger to my origin, a dependent upon the bounty of a distant relation; without fortune, without rank, without attractions to claim the notice of such an object. Is it not madness to think of him?

Oh! Sophia, I am cherishing a poison in my heart which will destroy its vital source, and extinguish all the rays of hope that glistened on my paths of peace and solitude: the prospect before me is terrible to contemplate!

In less than a year I shall attain the age of twenty-one; I shall then know the secret of my birth, and the prospects of my future existence. Madame St. Bruno often mentions that period with tearful eyes, and never without charging me to prepare for an event most seriously interesting. She takes infinite pains to alienate my thoughts from the pleasures of this life, and recommends

commends the cultivation of hopes beyond the grave. What can she mean? I think this monastic seclusion—is not to be---eternal! I am not, I trust, a destined victim to the superstitious gloom of religious rigour---there was a time-- and that not long since, when I might have borne such an idea with patience;—but then—I had not seen—I had not conversed with—Edward Percival!—Oh! beautiful, unfortunate Bertha! I now more than ever sympathize with thy shade, and wherever it wanders, envy its release from misery: happy should I be to share thy moss-clad sepulchre.

“ The world forgetting, by the world forgot.”

I am ashamed to meet our venerable Confessor; the sanctity of Pere Leonard would inflict the severest penance on my fault;— is it a fault to admire, to adore a deserving object? If it is,
LETTER I fear

I fear I shall never cease to be culpable!

Adieu,

My dear Sophia,

Ever affectionately your's,

LAURA FITZ-OWEN.

LETTER

LETTER XXXI.

SIMON GALLIARD,

TO THE REV. MR. COURTNEY.

Litchfield Abbey, June, 1790.

REVERED SIR,

I AM honoured with my Lady's demands to reform you, how much she was apprised and defended at a person of your clarified profession, assuming to devolve yourself in a dispute, expressly when you know how my Lady's delicate institution will be arranged on account of her extreme solitude for your welfare.—The news of your fight brought on an accession of historical fits, from which she is not yet discovered.

She further bequests your emergent return to Litchfield Abbey, or that
you

you will design your situation as her
domestical chaplain.

I am,

Sir,

Your most obliging,

Humble Sarvant,

SIMON GALLIARD.

LETTER

LETTER XXXII.

LAURA FITZ-OWEN,

TO SOPHIA CLEVELAND.

Lausanne, July, 179-

“*LA vie n'est qu'un Songe!*” are we not then permitted to anticipate such prospects as will contribute to our happiness? Are we not authorized in cherishing those delightful phantoms that sometimes gild our short slumbering hours of existence? Heaven knows they seldom visit the feeling heart; and when they do, they bring with them such surprise, that before we are familiar with their charms they are vanished.

Few are my pleasures, and those of so melancholy a nature, that none will envy them. I often endeavour to

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amuse

amuse myself with those pursuits by custom adapted to the female mind. I have a little knowledge of painting in miniature, and you shall one day or other see the likeness I have finished of my cousin. I don't think I could have painted *Pere Leonard* half so well.

Often do I contemplate it with a mournful satisfaction. I have been at the farm-house where Edward lodged ; I have seen the chamber where he was confined ;—I examined every corner of it. A small table, with a looking-glass, stood before the little casement: here, thought I, did he behold with indifference, those features which awaken every other heart to the tenderest interest.

I opened the window to see if it commanded a view of our convent, and the blush of conscious pleasure rushed over my cheek, when I plainly distinguished

guished the window of my apartment. Fancy, for a moment, bade me believe that he had not beheld even so trifling an object without emotion ; not recollecting that it was impossible for him to know in what part of the building I slept. I shut the casement, but——Oh ! Sophia, how shall I describe my sensations, when I perceived, on its small octagon pane, the following words written with a diamond.

“ I swear eternal fidelity to my
adored Laura Fitz-Owen.” E. P.

I instantly recollected having seen him wear a brilliant hoop ring ; I thought it looked like a token of female affection, and the idea was by no means a pleasing one ; however, it was then soon forgotten.

I would have given all I possessed to have obtained that little pane of glass.

O 2

I did

I did not dare break it, lest I should do it awkwardly, and deface the sentence. While I was considering how to act, Belinda arrived. "I watched you across the fields," said she, "from my chamber window. What romantic nonsense brings you here? Is your *beau cousin* returned, or are you contemplating the dear miserable apartment where he reposed so often?" She uttered this with a sarcastic smile, that wounded me to the soul; but all my attention was employed in keeping her from observing the pane. She perceived my anxiety, and pulling me away, said, "Laura, what is there to be seen so curious that you will not suffer me to approach the casement? Oh! here I have it; very tender indeed! I suppose Mr. Percival wrote his vows upon this brittle composition to shew that they may be easily broken." I was mortified to the heart. "Very likely," said I, endeavouring to

to smile, "I never saw any thing so ridiculous." "Let us break it," said Belinda, "Madame St. Bruno would be very much displeased, I assure you, if she heard of such a thing; and she often comes here to see old Terese."—She lifted her hand, I shrieked, I know not why. "Pray don't, Belinda," said I, "I have a diamond at the convent, which Madame St. Bruno gave me, it will cut the glass, and we will come and steal it to-morrow." "Nonsense, never mind breaking it," replied she, "I will pay old Terese for the pane;" and taking up the bolt which lay upon the window, she shattered it into fifty pieces.

I could scarcely support myself. I thought I should have fainted. Belinda called Terese, and apologized for the accident by giving her some silver; to me she made no excuse, though I was the most mortified by the event. Oh,

my friend, why was I born to endure the curse of sensibility?

All the way home I could scarcely suppress my tears. Belinda, though she has the best heart in the world, seemed to enjoy my agitation, while by her childish vivacity and foolish remarks, she almost provoked me to anger.

Early the next morning I stole out of the convent, and flew to the farm; on my searching among the flowers beneath the window, I found all the precious fragments, and have so arranged them, as to be able to read the whole sentence, which I do an hundred times a day. You will smile at my childish confession; but I dare write to you, that which I should tremble to utter before the holy cell of our austere *Pere Leonard*; to whom the
gentle

gentle accents of consolation are unknown.

I shall go again in search of any treasure that may bear the name of Edward.

" Oh ! name for ever sad, for ever dear ;

" Still breathed in sighs, still usher'd with a tear."

Adieu, Sophia, believe me,

Yours faithfully,

LUARA FITZ-OWEN.

LETTER

LETTER XXXIII.

HENRY COURTNEY,
TO EDWARD PERCIVAL.

Charleton Priory, July, 179.

I AM convinced, for the first time in my life, that I have been to blame.— My suspicions were groundless, and, I fear, I appeared perfectly ridiculous.

I have received a command to return to Litchfield Abbey ; but as it was conveyed to me by a third person, I shall answer the summons by the most sovereign contempt. Mrs. Percival is now on a visit to Lady Littlefigure, at *Sans Sixsous*, where I should be accounted a most superfluous animal.— Pharoah and his host are the only sacred characters admitted to the honour of a sitting in that community.

I have

I have not yet seen Sophia. I am impatient to meet her once more---and yet---I wish to protract the interview, for I am conscious of having injured her, by my unjust suspicions.--- Would it not be better to quit this place? by which means I should, perhaps, recover my wandering senses, and appease the anger of Mrs. Percival.

Yes---I am resolved,---I will fly from slavery---but I must write to Sophia once more. I will reproach her for her inhumanity, and then bid the ungrateful girl adieu for ever!

Yours,

HENRY COURTNEY.

LETTER

LETTER XXXIV.

LAURA FITZ-OWEN, •

TO SOPHIA CLEVELAND.

Lausanne, June 179-.

A COURIER yesterday arrived at Lausanne, with the intelligence that an earthquake has been severely felt in the vicinity of Naples. Oh! Sophia, Percival is there---perhaps he has perished! I am alarmed most seriously---I am afflicted beyond expression!

I know not how I shall obtain authentic information. There is little doubt of the dreadful fact; but the extent of its mischief is not yet ascertained. I shall not wish to live, if my Edward is no more. My Edward---no---he never will be mine. So blest, so mild a fate, will never be that of your unfortunate friend.

Oh!

Oh! Sophia, could you examine my heart, while it is agonized with fear and tenderness---could you but know the sighs, the tears, I offer up to heaven, for his safety, you would pity me.

The SHEPHERD BOY, on yonder mountain's crest,
Chaunts his rude carol, to the morning gale;
Or marks, with tranquil eye, and thoughtless breast,
Pale twilight's shadows stealing o'er the vale.

But I, alas! unconscious of repose,
Count the long tedious hours, and weep and sigh!
While my sad heart no tender solace knows,
Save the fond hope, to see thee once,—and die.

Oh! EDWARD! when this fading form shall freeze,
Beneath the hallowed turf for ever laid;
While o'er my bosom moans the midnight breeze,
Say, wilt thou drop one tear,—to soothe my shade;
Some wealthy maid, thy darling bride shall be;
I'll boast the prouder bliss!—TO DIE FOR THEE!

I conjure you to be secret in regard to whatever I write, for should this unaccountable weakness of mind be known to Edward Percival,---even were it possible that he could offer me
his

his hand, with the sanction of his friends, I would not receive it! No! Sophia; Laura Fitz-Owen can never condescend to accept an heart, which is not the voluntary offering of its possessor.

My delicacy shrinks at the bare idea. Adieu! I am overwhelmed with apprehension.

Yours,

LAURA FITZ-OWEN.

LETTER

LETTER XXXV.

THE SAME TO THE SAME.

Lausanne, May 179-.

MY mournful heart is released from its painful state of suspense. We have received another letter from Edward--- he is, thank heaven, safe and happy!

The earthquake was not productive of any very dreadful calamity ; but the alarm has driven almost every English family from Naples.

The want of society (for Englishmen only travel to associate with their own countrymen, wherever they can meet them) will probably hasten my cousin's departure. I hope he will return by Lausanne. I shall be eager to see if he is altered by his travels.

Madame St. Bruno has several times

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remarked

remarked a change in my manner ; and often seriously questions me about the state of my mind. I do not know that I am more melancholy than usual. Perhaps my constant visits to the shrine, render me pensive, and give me the appearance of mournful inquietude. No other circumstance can produce such an effect ; at least none that I am conscious of.

Madame St. Bruno has some idea of soliciting permission to remove from Lausanne to Germany, her native country. The abbess of a convent near Vienna lately died, and great interest will probably obtain the situation for our amiable superior. The order is that of the *Saint Esprit*, the highest in our religion, and only allowed to those who are of illustrious families. I shall certainly accompany her, though I shall almost break my heart at leaving the ashes of my beloved Bertha.

This

This affair interests the whole convent. All the sisters suffer the most poignant distress at the idea of her quitting them. She is the very best of women ; her mind is the picture of what her person must have been ; every thing that is lovely and interesting ! She is yet only in her forty-fifth year, and still very beautiful. Though she seems to be the only person unconscious of her attractions, they are acknowledged by every one---they are beheld with affectionate adoration by,

LAURA FITZ-OWEN.

LETTER XXXVI.

SOPHIA CLEVELAND,

TO LAURA FITZ-OWEN.

Charleton Priory, August 1792.

DEAREST LAURA,

My spirits are so agitated, that I can scarcely proceed to give you an account of the last three days occurrences.

Yesterday morning, while I was preparing to accompany Lady Moreland to our favourite hermitage, Mr. Courtney's servant brought me the letter I enclose, saying, that his master had commanded him to deliver it cautiously into my own hands. The singularity of receiving an epistle with such ambiguous injunctions, made me hesitate

tate whether I ought to open it; when Lady Moreland, good humouredly smiling, said, "Take it, Miss Cleveland; pray don't mind me; I am very discreet when entrusted with a secret." I replied, that I was not conscious of any secret Mr. Courtney could possibly have with me; but that if she would excuse my attending her, I would, when she returned, gratify her curiosity.

I retired to my chamber with my letter; but before I could break the seal, Lady Cavil burst open the door, and with all the symptoms of frenzy, exclaimed, "There, Miss! now I hope you are satisfied; Courtney and Colville are gone out to fight, and in all probability you will have enough to reproach yourself with, for the rest of your life!" then throwing herself into a chair, she appeared almost breathless with rage

and fatigue. I apprehended that she would faint, and my anxiety on her account roused my torpid senses from the stupor of surprise and despair.

I endeavoured to persuade Lady Cavil to calm her troubled spirits, and await with patience the result of their meeting. I was answered only by the most unworthy epithets, such as monster! wretch! barbarian! and a thousand others too shocking for me to repeat; though I am sorry to say, that they seemed perfectly familiar to Lady Cavil, whom I had never before seen in such a paroxysm of frenzy. Many hours came, and passed away, yet no one approached the chamber; all was silent as death.

In this dreadful state of uncertainty did I remain for four hours, when I saw from my window, returning, Lord Moreland,

Moreland, Sir Hervey Wentworth, and Sir Francis Colville—but no one else! I had just strength sufficient to reel towards the bell, yet, before I could reach it, I fell senseless to the ground. How long I remained in this situation I cannot tell, but when I recovered, I perceived that my raving companion had quitted me, and consigned me to the care of the old housekeeper, whom, I now remember, wanted me to swallow what she called “some of master’s fine spirits,” saying, “that it was all over now, and as the gemmen were parted, nothing worse could happen.” Then I ventured to enquire if either was wounded. “No, no,” answered my simple old attendant, “they beant none on em hurted—why, lord bless’ey, I dares to say, they only went out for a bit of a frolic, to scare the ladies; besides, Muster Courtney be gone away to London.”

I was

I was so overjoyed to hear of Courtney's safety, that her harangue soon became tiresome and intruding. I told her that I was much better, and, after thanking her for her assiduity, requested that she would suffer me to rest 'till the evening.

I should like to know why Courtney has quitted the Priory so abruptly, and without taking leave of the family.

Oh! my dearest Laura, I once flattered myself with the hope, that I might, in your blissful habitation of humble virtue, forget the world and its vicissitudes. But I fear, that even to the peaceful sanctuary of the ill-fated BERTHA, my misfortunes would pursue me.

Adieu,

Adieu, my dear friend. Believe
me yours most affectionately,

SOPHIA CLEVELAND.

Mr. Courtney is this instant returned! I cannot conceive the cause of all this mystery! I think his conduct has been extremely ridiculous.

LETTER

LETTER XXXVII.

HENRY COURTNEY,
TO EDWARD PERCIVAL.

Reading, Twelve at Noon.

I LEFT Charleton Priory this morning—applaud my resolution---congratulate me on my escape from slavery.

Yours,

HENRY COURTNEY.

LETTER XXXVIII.

THE SAME TO THE SAME.

Charleton Priory, Twelve at Night.

DEAR EDWARD,

I THOUGHT it most prudent to return to the Priory, than submit quietly to Sir Francis Colville, and suffer him to triumph in the idea of having driven me away; besides, I recollected that I had not taken leave of Sophia.

Adieu! I know thou wilt commend my wisdom in returning to face my enemy.

Yours truly,

HENRY COURTNEY.

LETTER XXXIX.

EDWARD PERCIVAL,
TO HENRY COURTNEY.

Florence, August 179-.

I REALLY believe that my mother will write me letters of advice from the other side the Styx! I wish, my dear Courtney, that you would bribe good Doctor —— to say that writing is bad for the health.

You have no idea what a disappointment it is, when I call for my letters in the morning, expecting some tender *billet* from my enchanting partner of the last night's *festino*, to receive a long tedious scrawl of advice, preaching about virtue, morality, and œconomy; "things, that to hear them named, have made me tremble;" but I suppose those amiable old virgins are
the

the enlivening inmates of Litchfield Abbey, I mean during the summer months, for when my mother returns to Cavendish-square, for the winter, I believe "My lady's not at home," would be the only salutation they would receive. Mrs. Percival informs me in all her letters, that I shall be as "rich, as I am virtuous." Alas! most worthy Chaplain, what a dreary prospect lies before me!

But to efface the melancholy impression this doleful subject has made upon my mind, I must relate to you an adventure, which, though laughable at the time, was nearly productive of a very serious misfortune.

After dining with Sir Robert Littleworth, where, I confess, we were rather too liberal in our sacrifices to the rosy god; and, in this mirthful mood, did we sally forth into the street, resolving

solving, *l'Angloise*, to attack the first *quiz* we should encounter; but finding nothing worthy the attention of such *preux chevaliers*, we agreed to try what amusement could be procured at the Opera.

On entering the lobby, Sir Robert exclaimed, "this is elysium, by Jupiter!" then turning to me, asked if I dared "queer St. Peter?" But before I had time to answer, I saw my inebriated companion spring over the bar where the money was received, and throwing a pinch of snuff into the eyes of the astonished door-keeper, with one hand, with the other he snatched his well powdered *perrucca* off his head; then swinging it round his own, exclaimed, "this is the manner in which we pay in England, my old genius." Ill-fated *perrucca*! thy misfortunes did not terminate here; for, "thereby hangs a tale!" Alas!

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while he was swinging it in all directions, scattering around a cloud of powder, it slipped from his unsteady hand and flew, as if to seek protection from the "pitiless storm," against its own twin brother, which was then adorning the scientific scone of a grave old physician, who, I observed, was also attempting to shoot the bar, though in a more quiet way—(*chacun a sa facon*)—as though he had a *pressentiment* of the disgrace which would befall his black velvet suit. This unlucky coalition of caxons, excited universal entertainment. I began, however, to think it unfair that the honest old door-keeper should lose his gala wig by our frolic ; but in stooping to recover it, I lost my equilibrium, and measured my length on the ground. Still unwilling to relinquish my pursuit, I continued my search, and seizing the ermined *pantoufle* of an ancient Italian *il'ustrissima*, exclaimed, " I have

have found it ;” then raising myself on my knees, instantly produced the precious trophy! A roar of laughter echoed thro the lobby, while the sable son of Esculapius conveyed his lovely partner in misfortune to her carriage, both exclaiming, with one accord,—
“ *cbe bestia Inglese !*” I believe I shall quit Florence as soon as possible ; for I find, that *mia cara marchesi* has the power of inflicting a mortal wound—not with the arrow of the blind son of the Paphian divinity, but with the *stiletto* of a sharp-sighted Florentine *birbone*.

Farewell!

Yours,

EDWARD PERCIVAL.

LETTER XL.

HENRY COURTNEY,

TO EDWARD PERCIVAL.

Charleton Priory, August 1797.

I AM determined to put a period to this wretched anxiety of mind; I adore Sophia Cleveland, and she knows it. 'Tis even better to despair, than to linger out an age of miserable uncertainty: this is the last trial, if she refuses to listen to me, my mind is made up as to the consequences.

It is her constant custom to pass an hour every morning at the Hermitage, near the river; She generally arrives before nine. I shall leave a letter there to-morrow morning. As I do not mean to express her name in the superscription, if it falls into unhal-
lowed

lowed hands, it can be productive of no ill consequences. Oh! Percival, death is mercy to the criminal who is condemned. We look forward with delight to the last sad prospect, and the sooner the scene of despair is terminated, the better.

I know you will laugh at me ; but I had rather become the object of your ridicule than your pity ; and since I have resolution to brave my danger, I trust a small portion of it will remain, to enable me to endure the worst that may happen. Farewell! Wish me success.

Yours faithfully,

HENRY COURTNEY.

LETTER XLI.

LAURA FITZ-OWEN,
TO SOPHIA CLEVELAND.

Lausanne, August 1797.

EVERY event which nearly concerns my dear Sophia deeply interests me; and I trust the certainty that I am ready to participate your pains and pleasures, will diminish the one, and augment the other. The SUPREME, when he ordained this probationary scene for mortals, for purposes unknown, strewed its paths with flowers and thorns alternately, but he gave us the never-failing balm of friendship to heighten the enjoyments of his blessings, and to heal the miseries of his severity! I lament that you should have been the cause, though the innocent one, of an event so serious as that you mention; But I blame the misguided

guided petulancy of Mr. Courtney, who ought to have known you better than to have suspected you were capable of encouraging a rival. I shuddered when I proceeded in reading your letter: a duel is to me the most unnatural, ferocious, and outrageous act that is sanctioned by the laws of society; and when we consider how often, by the mere trifling neglect of childish *etiquette*, whole families are left to mourn out a long and painful scene of regret, owing to the mistaken sensations of an irritable mind, I am almost tempted to rank duelling in the list of unpardonable offences. Will nothing less than murder satisfy the rancour of revenge?

I often think of Edward Percival, and tremble lest any ill should befall him in the country where he is wasting a valuable existence; for, after all, Italy has but few sources of improvement,

ment, except to the *Virtuoso* or *Cognoscenti*, in music or painting: I do not believe my cousin travels for either of those objects. The pleasures of Italy are such as will corrupt his open honest heart; and by the constant scenes of deception before him, he will become suspicious for ever after. My adorable Madame St. Bruno has inspired my mind with this idea. I wish I dared communicate it to Edward. Would it not be an act of friendship, to guard him against duplicity?

We have only received two letters from him. Alas! he is more delightfully employed than in thinking of our poor monastery.

I know not why, but Madame St. Bruno is lately more attentive to me than ever; though she has always loved me with the tenderness of a mother; but now she treats me as a friend and companion.

companion. She is no longer rigid respecting my hours of seclusion, or application to study. By this means I am afforded many opportunities of visiting the SHRINE of BERTHA, and I am eager to embrace them, for the approach of winter will oblige me to diminish my devotions: Yes, I may say fervent devotions! for I have wept and poured forth many a more sincere prayer for her than ever I did for myself. I am attached to the spot by the most extraordinary instinct; and when I leave it, I resign every consoling hope till I again return. 'Tis very singular that in the holyday of youth my heart should indulge itself in the most profound melancholy! I think I could pass all my days in the gloom of my present habitation with pleasure—if—there did not exist—an Edward Percival! Again returning to the same object!—Sophia, I blush at my own weakness.—I entreat you to
• forget

forget it: but if I cease to make him the subject of my letters, they will be dull and uninteresting. I cannot write, I cannot think of any other being. What malignant star prompted Mrs. Percival to make him the bearer of her letter? I wish the happy could be content with their lot, without endeavouring to call forth the mournful reflections of the unfortunate. Why was I nursed in this dreadful obscurity, if it was not to be perpetual? The gleam of delight I have for a moment enjoyed, is like the sun-beam darting through the iron lattice of a dungeon, to awaken the wretch whose eyes were accustomed to darkness, and who wanted not its lustre to mock his afflictions.

Adieu, my dear Sophia,

Yours affectionately,

LAURA FITZ-OWEN.

LETTER

LETTER XLII.

EDWARD PERCIVAL,

TO SIR FRANCIS COLVILLE.

Rome, August, 179--.

WE have been entertained with a most charming earthquake at Naples--- but as I had no inclination to become an addition to the curiosities of an Herculaneum, I thought it most prudent to make a precipitate retreat. I fear I should not appear to advantage when dug out of ruins an hundred years hence, with ancient non-descript vases and verdigreased farthings; neither should I derive any consolation from the prospectus of my poor bones decorating the shelf of an antiquarian, carefully hoarded in a modern antique urn of Derbyshire petrefaction!!

All

All the English have quitted Naples; each *Mi Lor Anglois* supposing that even the earthquake would respect his *noblesse*, and by visiting him first, allow him precedency over all other nations! 'Tis impossible to persuade my consequential countrymen that we are all earth alike; for they fancy that there is as much difference in the compound of human clay, as between a brown jug and a jar of Seve Porcelaine.

In six months more the term of my banishment will be completed, when I shall return to England, (not much wiser than I left it) to pay my respects to my mama, to shew my learning, forget what I have seen, and talked of adventures which I never encountered!

I was commanded to make the tour of Germany, but I feel a strange inclination

nation to take a circular *route*, and once more to contemplate the beauties of Switzerland. I cannot return to England without again beholding my Laura. Oh! Colville, she is too lovely a flower to fade in the freezing bosom of monastic superstition. Does not thy dull imagination prompt thee to make a pilgrimage to Lausanne?—Yet---don't trouble yourself to travel so far, for by heaven you shall not see her. I will caution Madame St. Bruno against an incendiary, who intends to burn her convent, and carry off the whole community of misanthropic maidens! Don't come, for if I hear that one *Chevalier* Colville, *Anglois*, is in the neighbourhood of Geneva, I shall fly from Naples with a legion of Lazzeroni to way-lay thee in the forest, and---“lap thee in Elysium!” “Good gentle youth, tempt not a desperate man,” for such you will find

EDWARD PERCIVAL.

R

VOL. I.

LETTER XLIII.

HENRY COURTNEY,

TO EDWARD PERCIVAL.

Priory, August 179--.

"Now are my brows bound with victorious wreaths!" I am wild---transported beyond myself! read, read the enclosed copy, for I would not transmit the original to be master of the world. Read, and envy the happy, happy,

HENRY COURTNEY.

LETTER

LETTER XLIV.

TO THE REV. H. COURTNEY.

(Enclosed)

THE most fortunate event of my life was that which induced me to visit the Hermitage this morning, where I found your letter directed "To the fairest." Yet my dear Courtney. Dear, what am I writing?—Yes---"fain would I dwell on form; fain, fain deny what I have spoke, but farewell compliment." Yes, Courtney, you are dear to me, and I acknowledge it without a blush. Was it not imprudent to direct so fully?—Reflect on the impropriety of a young unmarried woman carrying on a clandestine correspondence; be cautious, I conjure you.

Remember I am not a trifling, capricious fool—and will never be in-

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duced

duced to bestow my hand where my heart is not its companion. My fortune is your's—my fate is decided—but what are the adventitious gifts of wealth to a soul like thine? My affections are free: at least they were, but, alas! they are so no longer!

Avoid me in company; and I entreat you not to shock the delicacy of my feelings, by addressing me in my own name. I cannot relinquish that propriety which has marked every action of my life, and which must be commendable in the opinion of a correct and sensible mind.

Adieu, amiable Courtney,

Remember thy

OPHELIA.

LETTER

LETTER XLV.

LAURA FITZ-OWEN,

TO SOPHIA CLEVELAND.

Lausanne, July, 1790.

I HAVE interesting news to tell you, my dearest Sophia: Madame St. Bruno has obtained her promotion, and we shall, in three months, depart for Germany. She allows Belinda, Claudine Laval, (who came to the convent with her,) and myself, to be the companions of her journey. I look forward with satisfaction to the change of scene, for here every thing is become mournful and replete with dreadful pressentiments.

I shall feel a pang, notwithstanding when I quit, for ever, the gloom in which I have been nursed from my infancy. I shall, with regret, behold

R 3 all

all the melancholy records of past hours, and heave a sigh as I tread, for the last time, the hallowed cloisters, worn by the footsteps of our sacred sisterhood.

But oh! the shrine of my poor suicide! Shall I leave it exposed to the rude hands of vulgar passengers? to the inclement seasons? to the eye of unfeeling curiosity? Perhaps her ashes will be scattered to the winds; alas! all my nights and days will be wretched; fancy will present her eternally before me;—I am chilled at the idea! If I were rich, I would give the honest Etienne half my fortune to watch over my dear favourite solitude, and guard it from the base hand of violation.

Belinda Warton is grown more reserved than usual; there is a cold complaisance

plaisance in her manner that freezes the warm soul of friendship. I never mention Edward Percival to her. We are less together than formerly; and there does not seem to be that congeniality of sentiment which, till lately, united us. If she likes my cousin, she is the most treacherous of beings, because---she knows that I like him too. But I fear my pen is the wing which seems to bear away my prudence;---it will soon tire, and my old associate will, I trust, return to her native home.

You shall hear from me again before I quit Lausanne. I wish my road lay towards England instead of Germany. Happy, happy are those who live in that land of genius and prosperity! Alas! Sophia, we who are destined to whither in the misty regions of superstition, only half exist!---we gleam like
pale

pale meteors through the gloom of
night, and then are seen no more!

Adieu,

Sincerely your's,

LAURA FITZ-OWEN.

LETTER

LETTER XLVI.

HENRY COURTNEY,
TO OPHELIA.

August, 1790.

YOUR generous confidence in answering my letter, proves, that the innocence of your ingenuous heart inspires you to laugh at the affectation of over-acted formality. Dearest Ophelia, you are too nobly gifted by nature to adopt the mean and miserable subterfuge of art, while the undisguised sentiments of your mind shrink from the baseness of suspicion.

Most lovely, most adored Ophelia, your injunctions shall be minutely obeyed. I will with pleasure acknowledge the name under which you have made me the happiest of mortals. I approve your caution, and will, (if my

my heart will suffer me) treat you with indifference. I know your soft timidity would be overwhelmed if your name was made the subject of insolent animadversion: indeed, for many reasons, secrecy will be bliss.

I conjure you, continue to answer my letters. I shall leave them under the straw mattress in the Hermitage. Blessed hermitage! the scene of my Ophelia's meditations; the delicious solitude where she dares, unseen, perhaps breathe forth the name of Courtney.

Oh! transporting thought; I shall not be able to conceal my joy. Do not be offended, but such is my romantic passion, that I cannot suffer you to evince the smallest attention towards another: even the trivial instances of grateful esteem you shew towards the
venerable

venerable Sir Hervy, make me almost hate him, while I envy his happiness.

Alas! Ophelia, we are not masters of ourselves; you are all the world to me; and I only exist in the hope of receiving the full conviction, that you are not capable of hurrying me to despair.

Beautiful Ophelia, believe me thine,
and thine only,

HENRY COURTNEY.

LETTER

LETTER XLVI.

LAURA FITZ-OWEN,

TO SOPHIA CLEVELAND.

Lausanne, August 1790.

EVERY succeeding day brings some new misfortune for your solitary friend. I fear that I have forfeited the regard of our beloved monitress, Madame St. Bruno, my more than mother! She meets me with the clouded brow of mistrust, and studiously avoids all conversation with me. Perhaps she is offended at the girlish curiosity which induced us to molest the remains of the unhappy BERTHA! But then she would avoid Belinda also, who now seems to triumph in the possession of that friendship, which I have lost: there is no reptile so dangerous as the meek, seeming, insidious, domestic

mestic viper: the smiling, soothing sycophant!

Surely she—my friend—cannot be treacherous—she would not betray me! Yet, if she were inclined, do I not know the rectitude of my soul? Have I a wish,—a thought,—which I do not communicate to Pere Leonard? Yes. I have never mentioned Edward Percival! For that I am culpable.

But, Madame St. Bruno—I am perplexed and heart-wounded when I think of her displeasure. Why is she unkind to me? Why does she shun my conversation, and exact a more rigid attention to study, than she has lately done? Some unknown cause must influence her conduct. Perhaps she has been informed of our adventure at the farm-house. No, Belinda is not so base. I will not persuade myself that she could descend to the

despicable character of a tale bearer. What have I done? Another letter from Edward is arrived—but I have not seen it! Oh! most unkind, most cruel punishment. If I could only hear its contents, I would submit to any penance Pere Leonard could inflict.

I am determined, if she does not inform me of my crime, to throw myself at her feet, and entreat an explanation. Conscious of loving her more than any human being, except one, I cannot exist another day under her displeasure. I will not leave you in suspense, by closing my letter. Perhaps to-morrow may produce some *eclaircissement*. I will soon resume my my pen.

* * * * *

O! Sophia, my misery is complete! I am robbed of the only consolation my melancholy life afforded. My miniature---

niature—the dear resemblance of Edward Percival---with the fragments of that hallowed pane, made sacred by his name.

Does fate delight in augmenting my miseries, by depriving me of every little source of satisfaction? Am I unworthy of so small a gratification?

I remember locking my scrutoire ; yet I will not believe, that under this roof of sanctity and virtue, there exists a being capable of using false means. I hope that whoever has it, will preserve it. I should expire, if I thought his image could be treated with neglect. Perhaps it is a frolic of Belinda's to alarm me ; yet she knew not that I had such a portrait.

I may be mistaken. I will search again.

* * * * *

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I did

I did not find my treasure ; but I found in its place, a paper, containing this severe reproof ; read it, my friend, and then form an idea of my consternation !

‘ The delicate propriety which ought to mark every action of a young woman’s life, will be violated, if Miss Fitz-Owen perseveres in her visits to the farm of old Terese. The indulgence which she has experienced under this roof, was a mark of that confidence, which she must expect no longer.’

Judge of my surprise, and my confusion, which was augmented by the abrupt entrance of Madame St. Bruno. Conscious of my own weakness, I trembled to meet her stern and penetrating eyes. She stood for some moments, without uttering a syllable. My burning cheek was suffused with
blushes,

blushes, 'till the recollection of her having meanly pilfered my little treasures, during my absence, awoke that resentment, which inspired me with courage to encounter her reproaches. However, she uttered none ; but in a calm and solemn voice, at the same time laying a paper on the table, desired me to read it, adding, " Miss Fitz-Owen, you are the best judge how far you are culpable ; I shall expect your defence ; and I trust it will be such, as will restore you to my esteem ;" then, bowing with graceful dignity, she left me to form my own conjectures. I opened the paper---the following is an exact transcript of its contents.

' A friend to Madame St. Bruno, and
' an admirer of the purity of her character, laments that she should be the dupe
' of one, to whom she has shewn such
' unremitting attentions. The clan-

‘ destine correspondence which Miss
‘ Fitz-Owen holds with an English
‘ gentleman, whose letters are con-
‘ stantly left at the farm of old Terese
‘ de Bouvais, will cast a stigma on the
‘ reputation of her sacred retreat,
‘ which has ever been celebrated for
‘ the propriety, that has marked the
‘ conduct of its inhabitants.’

Not conscious of having deserved such an accusation, I was hastening to the study of Madame St. Bruno, when I met Belinda: “ Oh! my friend,” said I, taking her by the hand, “ there are malicious wretches in this convent, and I am their victim.” I told her the story, and shewed her both the papers. A blush of honest indignation bespoke her astonishment. She pressed my hand in silent sympathy. I requested her to accompany me to Madame St. Bruno, to assist me in discovering my enemy, and to witness my exculpation.

She

She advised me to defer such an attempt, 'till the anger of our beloved abbess should subside ; but I was determined to assert my innocence ; and notwithstanding the entreaties, nay, almost force, of Belinda, to detain me, I immediately presented myself before my offended monitress.

I conjured her, on my knees, to assemble the whole community, in order that I might discover my enemy, and convince her of my rectitude.

Willing to give me every opportunity of exculpating myself, she readily complied with my request, and in a few minutes Claudine Laval informed us that they were waiting in the *Refectoire*. As I entered the apartment, the first person I observed was Pere Leonard. I would have given worlds, either that I had before confessed, or
that

that (not having done so) I could have avoided him at that moment.

A solemn silence prevailed.

Madame St. Bruno took her seat in the midst of the circle, and, I believe, never did a tribunal appear more awful.

The distressing situation in which I was placed, so sensibly affected the feeling heart of my dear Belinda, that she rose to quit the room, but fainted in the arms of Claudine. She was immediately conveyed into the garden for air. When the confusion which her sudden indisposition had occasioned was subsided, Madame St. Bruno, with the most impressive manner, desired that "the person who had written a letter to her respecting Miss Fitz-Owen, would come forward and prove the
the

the justice of the accusation." Astonishment seemed to prevail in every mind! "Now, Madam," said I, addressing myself to our amiable abbess, "suffer me to be my own accuser, and to confess how far I deserve reproof. I most solemnly deny having received letters from any man whatever. 'Tis true, I have often in my evening walks been tempted to call at the farm-house of Terese de Bouvais; but as I was always accompanied by Miss Warton, I trust I shall be acquitted of any improper motive."

Belinda, who had returned at the moment I was uttering the last sentence, was overwhelmed with confusion. I continued, "With regard to the picture of Mr. Percival," "the picture of Mr. Percival!"---exclaimed Madame St. Bruno, in the utmost consternation, "I painted it, merely as a specimen of my feeble talents."

Our

Our beloved abbess made no reply, but shook her head, as a mark of her disapprobation.

This last silent reproof wounded me more deeply than the severest lecture would have done. I could not restrain my tears, and therefore entreated permission to retire: I could at that moment have quitted this world without a sigh.

Madame St. Bruno followed me, and, to my infinite astonishment, kindly taking my hand, led me to her study. As soon as we entered, "My amiable Laura," said she, "the interest I take in every thing which concerns you, authorizes me to expect that confidence which you seem to deny me. I will not offend your delicacy by any further comments upon the events of this day—yet my zealous wishes for your eternal repose, prompt me to
hope,

that Mr. Percival has made no impression upon your mind." I disdain a falsehood, and therefore made no answer.

"Allow me," continued she, "to see the miniature you have painted, and to have the gratification of sending it to his mother. She will value it, as much for being a specimen of your genius, as for any resemblance it may bear to the original."

In vain did I assure her that it was stolen from my scrutoire. While I was endeavouring to convince her of the circumstance, the bell rang for vespers.

Never did I fly to my devotions with a more joyful heart.

I embraced the earliest moment to quit the chapel, and retired to my chamber

chamber to mourn for my loss, and reflect on the mysterious events of the day ; my mind sunk into melancholy reflections, and I endeavoured to soothe my sorrows, by composing the following

SONNET,

TO SYMPATHY.

Oh! SYMPATHY! thou pleasing source of pain ;
 Sad soothing comforter! that whisper'st low
 Unheard by vulgar ears, when weary woe
 Drags slowly on her never ending chain.
 When reason bends beneath oppression's reign,
 Thou can'st invoke the willing tear to flow,
 Teach the wrung heart, to feel a transient glow,
 And "sprinkle patience" on the throbbing brain.
 Oh! meliorating balm! that from Heav'n's sphere,
 Proud NATURE stole, of heav'nly joys the best,
 Thy outward attribute, a silent tear,
 Thy secret sanctuary, the feeling breast!
 And yet, O SYMPATHY! too much I fear,
 'Thou lend'st to LOVE no pitying hour of REST.

I have not seen Madame St. Bruno
 since ; and as the post departs this
 evening,

evening, I must close my letter, or rather packet, with every wish that you may be happier than

Your affectionate friend,

LAURA FITZ-OWEN.

LETTER XLVII.

SOPHIA CLEVELAND,

TO LAURA FITZ-OWEN.

Charleton Priory, August 1790.

I AM scarcely "in my proper mind." You know, my dearest Laura, that (though educated in a convent) I am far from superstitious, but the horrors I have lately witnessed, have overcome my resolution. I should condemn any body else for this weakness,---but what I have seen, I will believe!

My blood freezes while I repeat the tale: last night, after supper, we amused ourselves till a very late hour, singing catches and glees. Every one was in excellent spirits, except Lady Cavil,

Cavil, who retired early, being indisposed with a violent head-ach.

When I had bound up my hair, and put on my night-cap, I recollected the situation of my friend, and wishing to see her once more, before I retired to rest, I took up the lamp which was burning on the hearth, and gently stealing from my chamber, fearful of alarming the family, I proceeded along the gallery, with my eyes bent on the ground, dreading to encounter the stern glances, and pointing truncheons of the Wentworth's, arranged in a formidable phalanx along the lofty walls. Thank heaven, the beaux of modern times are less formidable.

I was not a little surprised, on entering Lady Cavil's apartment, to find that she was absent. I resolved, as it was then very late, to return to my chamber; when, as I passed the top of

the great stair-case, my eyes were fascinated by a faint gleam of light, reflected on the half rusted breast-plates, which hung round the hall beneath; thinking that I heard the echo of footsteps, and concluding them to be Lady Cavil's, I proceeded down to the first landing place, which commands a view of this Gothic hall.

Judge of my horror—"the time of night, together with the terror of the place,"——when I beheld a figure in complete armour, gliding among the bannered columns. I think I see at this moment the pale glare of the polished steel, as the phantom

—"Press'd,—

"What seem'd its hand, upon what seem'd its breast."

My involuntary shriek was answered by one still more dreadful. To return along the gallery was impossible; neither could it be supposed that I would
venture

venture to advance. Thus I stood, like one petrified with dismay; when I heard the most dismal groans, proceeding from the Gothic scene of horror; which, together with my screams, had alarmed the family. Seeing several people enter the hall, I summoned sufficient courage to venture down, where I found poor Lady Cavil in violent convulsions. Doubtless, she too had seen the dismal spectre; the very remembrance of which almost freezes my veins, when I recollect that I am now writing under the same roof!

Oh! my dearest Laura, I would not have to answer for the "foul and most unnatural murder," that can call the peaceful spirit from its mansion of repose,

• "To visit thus the glimpses of the moon,

• "Making night hideous!"

Heaven knows the scene will destroy all my happiness, while I remain at the Priory.

This morning, when I went down to breakfast, though the sun shone with dazzling lustre through the painted glass casements, I shuddered at the remembrance of last night!

You may laugh at my childish superstition, you may say I was fancying or dreaming; but I most solemnly declare, if there is belief in woman, that what I have related, I saw! Should you still question my veracity, Lady Cavil can witness the fact; though she is delicately cautious of mentioning the subject, on account of the amiable Sir Hervey, who doubtless has often heard of the night-wanderings of his shadowy guest.

Farewel! my dearest Laura: believe
me,

me, I envy you your undisturbed retreat, where the pure spirit can resign the oppressive load of grief and rest for ever!

I had almost forgot to tell you, Sir Hervey Wentworth intends to give a splendid *fete* in this *bannered* Hall. I wish I could persuade Lady Cavil to quit the Priory before the period arrives: the remembrance of its perturbed inhabitant will overshadow all the lustre of the scene.

I could not help smiling at your animadversions upon Mr. Percival's brilliant hoop-ring: perhaps you do not know that all men of fashionable notoriety, are seldom without some outward sign of their supposed successes; a woman's reputation is often sacrificed at the shrine of their vanity, and a visible token is a source of exquisite triumph. Some will wear wedding

ding rings, others, a curiously braided lock of hair, purchased at the jewelers', and as little valued as the object they traduce. Such are the arts of the professed man of gallantry!

Adieu, dear Laura,

Yours faithfully,

SOPHIA CLEVELAND.

LETTER

LETTER XLVIII.

SIR FRANCIS COLVILLE,
TO EDWARD PERCIVAL.

Priory, August 179-.

OH! the delights of Charleton Priory,
and my lovely Northern Nightingale,
Lady Cavi! !

Last evening, for three long hours,
did I listen to the melting tones of her
melodious voice; "Oh! they came
o'er my ear" like the bleak north that
roars upon the rugged thistle!

However, I was completely re-
venged for the many aching heads I
had experienced on her account.

I was so disgusted with her ridicu-
lous mixture of prudery and coquetry,
that

that I determined to ascertain which was the predominant failing. After considering in what manner I could laugh at the former, and expose the latter, I resolved to accomplish my design by means of an anonymous billet, of which the following is a copy:

“ You can be at no loss to discover
“ the writer of this, too lovely, too
“ unkind Lady Cavil ; for I flatter
“ myself that there is but one person
“ on earth capable of estimating your
“ value. Oh ! most amiable of women,
“ will you condescend to allow your
“ slave the honour of ten minutes con-
“ versation this night, at twelve o’clock,
“ in the Great Hall, after the family
“ are retired to rest ? I have a cir-
“ cumstance to communicate to you,
“ on which the happiness of my future
“ existence depends. If you refuse,
“ you never will know who was the
“ writer of this letter.”

I sealed

I sealed the heroic billet, and taking advantage of Lady Cavil's absence, on one of her nymph-like excursions in the forest; I left it on her toilette, under the precious casket which contained the roses and lilies of the next day's conquest; and then retired to wait the arrival of the delightful moment destined for the humiliation of my lovely Mountaineer.

I entered the drawing-room, before any of the family were returned from their morning avocations. The first person who arrived was Lady Cavil; there was a simpering smile of conscious triumph upon her ample cheek, which convinced me that my tender request was too gratifying to her vanity not to be complied with. I began to repent my frolic, lest she should suppose me serious. However, not suspecting me to be the despairing swain, she directed all her artillery of
languishing

languishing glances at Courtney, whose astonishment at her sudden partiality, and dismay at her assiduous attentions, amused me extremely during the evening. All my affectionate *devoirs* were rejected with disdain; while he, unconscious of his bliss, was lost in contemplating his beloved Sophia.

The time for our adventure now approached. Immediately after supper the gentle Cavil retired, selecting a nervous head-ach from her ample catalogue of romantic ailments, as an excuse for leaving us at so early an hour; and, to my infinite delight, I heard her say to Courtney, in soft and tender accents, as he opened the door for her, "remember twelve," he bowed respectfully, and returned to the table.

At this last instance of her conceited credulity, I confess I found it impossible to keep my risible muscles in any degree

degree of subordination. I whispered Courtney, " Shall I tell Miss Cleveland ?" Sophia, hearing her name mentioned, cast a look of the most eager enquiry, first at Courtney, then at myself. I was proceeding to torment the divine, when the pendule on the chimney struck the half hour after eleven : I recollected my engagement, and rose from the table, first, desiring the hero to " remember twelve, and not be cruel !"—then taking my hat from the sofa, I sought my chamber, to equip myself for the *rencontre*.

I had, in the course of the evening, ordered my servant, an ignorant West country boy, to go, unobserved, into the Hall, and procure one of the rusty Sir Huberts or Sir Walters which hung round in martial pride, to the extreme terror of the gaping peasantry. " What, Sir," exclaimed the fellow, staring, do " you mean they gentlemen with the

steel coats ? Oh ! goodness me, I would not touch one on 'em for all the money in the land : why I do think I do hear 'em groan when I do cross the Hall of a night ! “ You blockhead,” said I, “ go this instant, they are only coats of mail.” “ I don't care,” returned he, “ whether they be male or female, I a' been tould they abeen in many a brave battle ; besides, I never liked the looks on 'em, I do seem they be a bloody-minded set !” After this very eloquent harangue, and the most earnest entreaties to be spared from “ disturbing o' the dead,” I dismissed him.

By this time the hour of my appointment was arrived ; I took my taper, and running down the private staircase, immediately reached the Hall ; I then seized on the first suit of armour I could find, and returned in triumph with my ponderous paraphernalia. I could not help smiling when I reflected
on

on the ridiculous appearance I made, with my grotesque companion on my shoulders, as I hurried along to my own apartment.

When thus martially equipped, I took my post in the most obscure corner I could select, and, extinguishing my light, remained there with the eager expectations of a fond lover.

“The bell beating one,” I saw, gently stealing down the staircase, with her taper concealed behind her handkerchief, the lovely Lady Caviel. She walked, tottering and trembling, to the old oak table, near the chimney, and sitting down by the side of it, began to contemplate, in her pocket glass, the various beauties of those features which seemed to glow with the recollection of her recent conquest. I thought this a good opportunity to begin my line of march; accordingly

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I sallied

I sallied from my hiding place, and was gliding horribly towards my fair companion, when I heard a loud and piercing shriek, and turning my eyes towards the great staircase, saw Miss Cleveland coming down, pale as death, and almost breathless with terror. The boisterous Lady Cavil hearing her voice, started from her seat, but on seeing me, sunk on the ground in convulsions.

As self is the first object of consideration, I was ungallant enough to leave those fainting females to their fate, while I fled to my apartment to divest myself of my weighty accoutrements.

On my return to the scene of confusion, I found the whole family assembled: Lady Cavil was still on the ground, supported by Miss Cleveland; Lord Moreland had hobbled out of his apartment, and was leaning against
one

one of the pillars of the fabric, so rolled in flannel and fleecy hosiery, that mistaking him for a feather bed, which some of the servants had brought for the expiring Lady Cavil, I exclaimed, "Here, here, Courtney, lay her upon this," and seizing the Peer by the leg, levelled the roaring legislator with the ground, before I was aware of the mischief I had committed.

My turn to faint now arrived: imagine my alarm when I beheld a female figure gliding down the staircase, with a night lamp in its hand, by the light of which I discovered the lovely Lucretia Winterton! She was wrapped in what I conceived to be a blanket, but Lady Moreland informed me that it was a shawl. In the confusion, Miss Winterton had forgot to replace those lovely auburn tresses which she had (not suspecting that she should make her appearance any more that night)

carefully enclosed within their paste-board prison ; the rose had quitted her cheek, the lily her forehead ; but the constant ruby had scorned to desert its post.

Perceiving so large a group, she attempted to fly, but her trembling foot missing the step, she fell, and Courtney arrived just in time to receive her snug round head, like a cricket-ball between his hands.

Finding that she had no possible means of escaping, and ready to expire with rage and confusion, all the tempest of her wrath fell upon the hospitable Sir Hervey, whom she addressed in the following tender strain :

“ Sir Hervey Wentworth, I wonder that you should suffer such scandalous doings in your house!—Why a young lady

lady is not safe under your roof! for my part, these midnight revels may be perfectly adapted to the taste of some people," directing a ghastly smile to Lady Cavil; "but women of decorous opinion must be shocked at such outrages!—For you, Madam," (turning to Lady Moreland, who looked as beautiful as an angel) "I dare say your amiable Lord will profit by these humorous experiments; but men of sense know how to distinguish between propriety and ridiculous flirtation." "You are right, Miss Winterton," said I, stepping forward to replace the dusky drapery, which she called a shawl! that, in the warmth of debate, had fallen from her undecorated head; when I received, for my attention, a box on the ear, that totally subdued my gallantry, and deafened me, even to the boisterous laugh of Lady Cavil, which my humiliation excited.

As

As I found that I could be of no further service, I hastily took my leave of the enraged group, "and, smiling left them to grow cool at leisure."

You see we have our little lively amusements, and that there is no occasion to travel for adventures.

Yours,

F. COLVILLE.

LETTER

LETTER XLIX.

LAURA FITZ-OWEN,
TO SOPHIA CLEVELAND.

Lausanne, Sept. 179..

Oh! Sophia, how shall I find resolution to quit Lausanne; I have only another month before that awful period; alas! I shall find it by much too short for the million avocations that demand my attention. Heaven knows whether I am preparing for a journey of happiness or sorrow.

I have given Etienne all the money I can command in the world: he has vowed most solemnly, and heaven forbid that he should break his oath, to fortify my Shrine from the attacks of winter;

winter ; to build over it a rugged monument, and to say his daily *pater-nosters* near the sod. I trust his artless prayers will not be rejected.

I was overwhelmed with grief yesterday morning—the weather was uncommonly tempestuous ; it rained, and blew a hurricane : I had not slept since day break. My restlessness predicted approaching sorrows.

The thunder rolled in tremendous peals, and the lived lightning glared hideously over the vanes of our monastery ; and on the peaks of the distant Alps, its effect was beautifully awful.

I stole from *matins*, and from my chamber window, looked with mournful tenderness towards my dear retreat. More than common terror assailed all my faculties.

I saw

I saw part of the ruin shattered by the enraged elements. It fell near the grave of the unfortunate Bertha.

Oh! heavens! what my heart felt no language can describe. My poor Bertha—my mouldering victim. She—who had been nursed in the warm lap of splendour! Could she have been sensible of the surrounding horrors, her heart would, like mine, have shuddered with apprehension; but, alas! no tempests can disturb the silence of her abode!

I could not bear the idea that her remains should be exposed to the rude tempest; that the lightning should wither the flowers which decorated the turf—or the cold rain beat upon her bosom.——

Gracious God! why was I made acquainted with this fatal story, it embitters

bitters all my days. But I must teach myself to remember it no more.

In the evening the sky became serene! the landscape was beautifully refreshed by the showers that had fallen since the morning, and the sun set with uncommon splendour.

After evening prayers I crept out to visit my SHRINE. My soul was full of devotion and tenderness. I strolled gently along till I came within a few paces of the Shrine, and you will judge of my surprise, when, on suddenly entering the ruin, I beheld Madame St. Bruno, bathed in tears, her *rosary* laying on the sod, and she prostrate before the rude monument which I had erected.—

She rose suddenly, and in evident confusion.—I regretted that I had thus

thus intruded myself upon her sacred retirement.

“ My amiable Laura,” said she, “ I am here paying my fervent devotions, and offering up my humble prayers, as the last duty of Christianity before my departure.” I should be sorry to quit this sod, without bestowing one tear to the memory of its inmate.

She was in the most distressing agitation.---I kissed her hand---My grateful tears prevented utterance---I left her.---She watched me till I had quitted the ruin.

What can it mean? Dear Madame St. Bruno! She is the most perfect of human beings! If retirement from the busy haunts of life divests the heart of all its frailties, who would not wish for seclusion? ----- Yet this unfortunate BERTHA interests her feelings very singularly!

gularly!-----Tell me what are your conjectures?

I have visited every solitary spot on our romantic confines---the glades, the vine-yards, and the mountains! I have wandered beside the extensive lake, and I have stood on the battlements of our convent, to contemplate the surrounding country.-----Alas! I fancied I discovered new and superior beauties to those I had ever before remarked.

I gazed with delight on the snowy peaks, rising in grand perspective above the fertile landscape: The sunbeams glittering on them, and producing an infinity of splendid changes, as the tints of an evening sky, softened from the broad glare into the purple glow of twilight, and, as Addison says, "faintly scattered the remains of day."

Sophia,

Sophia, we never know the value of supreme delights till we find them receding from our view: I have had time to meditate. I have had hours drag slowly like lengthening years.

I saw the sun set last evening; and when the landscape faded in the mists rising from the water, I almost feared I might never behold them again---and at the returning dawn I flew with impatience to gaze once more on the scene of Nature's fairest works. Her hills, her woods, and her solitary dells! but alas! a time will shortly arrive when I shall look for them in vain---when I shall sigh to be the inhabitant of these my almost native walls; when I shall weep for the sight of my dear Shrine, and fancy that sacrilegious hands have broken the silence of my lost BERTHA's tomb. I dare not think of it: the idea is too distressing. Alas! poor victim!

“ How I envy thy pallet of rest ! ”

X 2

Perhaps,

Perhaps Edward Percival will return by Lausanne, and I shall not see him; I shall then be an inhabitant of a new world.

Alas! I am grieved to depart; but 'tis now too late to utter my complaints, my destiny is irrevocable.

Then, dear melancholy habitation! monastic gloom, where resignation is fostered in the sainted bosom of PIETY! where misery finds HOPE, and HOPE looks smiling to ETERNITY! dear shades! which cherished my young mind, and sheltered it from all the storms of a tempestuous world, farewell!

Farewell!--dear haunts of pleasing woes!

Ye sun-burnt vales, and forests drear;

Where oft, at evening's solemn close,

I've dropp'd the sad, the pensive tear.

Farewell! ye vineyards, whose rich glow

Derides the flaming orb of light!

Ye limpid streams that brawling flow,

Ye vanes that greet the traveller's sight.

Farewell!

Farewell ye shades of mountain pine,
Ye rude rocks black'ning o'er the wave ;
And, Oh ! farewell dear rugged SHRINE
That marks poor BERTHA's lowly grave.

I go, to paths of brighter hue,
Yet Memory oft shall wander here ;
And FANCY still shall flow'rets strew,
Begem'd with PITY's holy tear !

And when to distant realms I stray,
To mingling scenes of pomp and glee ;
Oft will I steal, lov'd SHADE, to pray,
And drop a tender tear for THEE !

That tear perchance may give relief,
And med'cine comfort to my woes !
For oft from sympathetic grief
The wounded bosom finds repose.

Oh ! I would ruminate and mourn,
From early DAWN till fading EVE ;
For 'midst the GAY, this heart forlorn,
Would turn to thee——and turn to grieve.

Still would my zealous care display
Each tribute thy sad fate demands !
Oft would I scatter garlands gay,
To shield thee from unhallow'd hands.

When MORN, its sunny wings spread wide,
Should wake each flow'r of gaudiest hue,
THY SHRINE should glow with softer pride,
MY TEARS surpass its spangling dew !

And when at EVENING's crimson hour
The batt' and beetle flitted round,
Faint echo, from yon mould'ring tow'r,
Should greet my song's prophetic sound.

And when the tissued veil of night,
Should scatter wide a doubtful gloom ;
Oft would I steal from mortal sight,
To weep and sigh o'er BERTHA's tomb !

But ah ! FAREWELL ! no more my strain
Shall vibrate through yon CLOISTER's shade ;
No more enchant the village SWAIN,
Or sooth to hope the love-lorn MAID !

No more, when rapt in pensive mood,
The CONVENT's bell, with silver sound,
Shall echo through yon specter'd wood,
To wake me from my dream profound !

No more the distant taper's glare,
Shall through the painted windows burn,
To mark the VESPER hour of pray'r
And bid my truant steps---return !

OH, BERTHA ! since ordain'd to part,
Since destin'd from thy DUST to stray,
Let RESIGNATION bathe my heart !
And THY meek SPIRIT---guide my way.

Farewell ! if any thing should delay
my journey I will write again ; and,
during its progress, you shall often hear
from me.

Pray let me know any thing you
learn respecting my cousin, now and
hereafter. 'Tis a foolish curiosity, but
it must be gratified,

Believe me, my dear Sophia,

Yours affectionately,

LAURA FITZ-OWEN.

LETTER

LETTER L.

SIR FRANCIS COLVILLE,

TO EDWARD PERCIVAL.

*Charleton Priory, Sept. 179-**Still harping on the adorable Lucretia.*

THE morning after our dreadful adventure, whether to recommence the battle, or owing to a sleepless night, through the alarm occasioned by the ghost, I cannot pretend to decide, but we had a full assembly by eight o'clock to breakfast.

Our nerves scarcely seemed to have recovered their tone since the discord of the preceding evening. The enchanting Lady Moreland's lovely mouth wore a perpetual smile, which she (though vainly,) endeavoured to suppress,

suppress, lest it should again call forth the resentment of the mild Lucretia.

Lady Cavil, notwithstanding a considerable augmentation of *rouge*, bore in every feature the visible vestiges of disappointment and terror, not daring to meet the eyes of any of the male part of the family, fearing that she might encounter the glances of her enamoured *incognito*.

Sophia looked much paler than the spectre she supposed she had beheld.

Lord Moreland was confined to his chamber with a fit of the gout, which I fear I had occasioned.

Then came, "though last, not least in our dear love, the woe-worn Winterton! from whom I kept a respectful distance.

Not

Not a syllable was uttered during our repast. Sir Hervey being exceedingly mortified at the melancholy which seemed universally to prevail, proposed an excursion to amuse his guests during the remainder of the day; and as Lady Moreland had expressed a desire to see Clifden, which is only eight miles from the Priory, as soon after dinner as six sleek, black, dock-tailed coach-horses could be fastened to the old caravan, for I cannot call it a coach, Lady Cavil, Miss Winterton, Miss Cleveland, and Courtney, became the inmates of this cob-webbed vehicle, while the charming Lady Moreland made me the happiest of men, by condescending to grace my curricule. As *politesse* obliged us to form part of the cavalcade, we followed the Wentworth waggon like a butterfly pursuing an elephant. In about two hours we arrived at the place of our destination. This superb mansion, which

which has all the grandeur of the last century, possesses little more than the architecture to recommend it. The furniture being ancient, was much admired by Miss Winterton, from the sympathetic feeling which pervades her heart upon all occasions. She could not, however, be persuaded to look at the pictures, till the woman who shewed every thing, assured her that there were no figures offensive to the eye of delicacy: of this Miss Winterton expressed her doubts—we proceeded.

In the first room we entered, there happened, unfortunately, to be a beautiful picture of a sleeping Venus—every eye was instantly fixed on Miss Winterton, who approached the woman, while her face reddened with rage and indignation, at the same time exclaiming, “You shameless wretch! what do you mean by offending modest eyes

eyes with such exhibitions?" "Expeditions," said the astonished woman, "I don't know of none; I am sure I see nothing ugly in this room." I could not exactly coincide with her in opinion. "And as for expeditions," continued she, "I scorn u'm as much as you does." "Shut up your room then," rejoined Miss Winterton. "Why, ma'm, it is my Lady's dressing-room," returned the simple show-woman. "More shame for her," added the chaste Lucretia, "but decency is out of fashion in the great world now a days." Saying this, she quitted the room.

Lady Moreland, finding that we had no chance of admiring the beauties of art, proposed that we should visit those of nature; and, with that engaging smile that always adorns her countenance, led the way to the garden. As soon as we had proceeded through the
court

court yard into the hanging wood,
“ This,” said Lady Moreland, “ re-
minds me of the spot immortalized by
the first representation of Milton’s
Comus. Oh! I could worship with the
most enthusiastic admiration

“———Every alley green,
Dingle or bushy dell of this wild wood.”

“ I don’t doubt it,” said Miss Winter-
ton, “ The improprieties of your fa-
vourite poet will ever be admired by
those who can countenance the mid-
night revels at Charleton Priory!”
darting a sarcastic glance at Lady Ca-
vil and myself. “ True,” replied
Courtney, repeating the following lines
from Comus:

“ Love VIRTUE! She alone is free,
“ She can teach you how to climb,
“ Higher than the Sphery Chime;
“ Or if Virtue feeble were,
“ Heaven itself wou’d stoop to her!”

"Produce any thing in Milton like that," said Miss Winterton, with an air of triumph. At this last instance of her ridiculous affectation and ignorance, the whole company burst into a loud shout, which so offended the divine Lucretia, that she hurried into the carriage, and would see no more.

The sun being now set, Lady Moreland was apprehensive of exposing herself to the night air; and as I had no inclination to be deprived of her company, I gave my curricule to the care of my servant, and we entered the coach, notwithstanding the groans and uplifted eyes of my virgin antagonist.

It was quite dark by the time we left the woods of Clifden. I was resolved to amuse myself at the expence of my venerable vestal, till we arrived at the Priory.

First I began to expatiate on the frequent robberies committed on that road; and was delighted to observe Miss Winterton carefully concealing her "rings and things, and fine array" in the pocket of the carriage, which (taking advantage of a cloud passing over the moon,) I safely conveyed into my own.

The treasures of the Gallery at Florence were the next subjects of conversation, upon which Miss Winterton was silent; but Lady Moreland, who has lately returned from Italy, expressed her opinion in a manner which evinced her taste and understanding. I was proceeding in my admiration of the *Venus de Medicis*, when I heard Miss Winterton say, or rather scream, "Stop, open the door, open the door, and let me get out: it does not signify, I can stay no longer to be shocked with Sir Francis Colville's indelicate discourse."

Y 2 course."

discourse." " Surely, Miss Winterton," said Lady Cavil, " there was nothing uttered that could offend the most scrupulous imagination." " You did not think so, I dare say, Madam," returned the lovely girl. " You will attempt to persuade me, that Venus Medusa was a very modest personage, and a proper object for animadversion. Yet, I think, Sir Francis might find other objects to amuse the company with, than anecdotes of his Italian Signoras." " You mistake me, Miss Winterton," returned I, in the most submissive tone. " If you will condescend to be informed, Lady Moreland can assure you that the Venus de Medicis is a very beautiful statue, and no *chere amie* of mine." " Sir," interrupted the enraged syren, " Lady Moreland may assert what she pleases, but I will not be accessory to any more of your profligate conversation." And, notwithstanding our united entreaties, she darted

darted out of the carriage into the road, which, on account of the heavy rain that had fallen during the preceding night, was not perfectly adapted to the "light fantastic toe" of the angry Lucretia. In vain did we endeavour to convince her of the impropriety of such a resolution. She was deaf to our persuasions, and insisted on the servant's giving his horse to the other, and attending her to the Priory.

I then took the liberty, in the most respectful tone, to offer my curricule, saying, that as she was determined to deprive us of her company, I thought that it would be more consistent with the rules of decorum to accept of Mr. Courtney's protection, and suffer him to have the happiness of defending her from the bold intrusion of impertinent assailants.

After many unavailing signs and
Y 3 pinches

pinches from Courtney, which I affected not to understand, I renewed my supplications. At length Miss Winterton, casting a most affectionate glance at her beloved champion, declared that she was ready to commit herself to his care, because she believed him to be a man of honour, and her person would be safe. I make no doubt but that it would have been equally so with any of the company.

I then recollected the awkward proposition I had made, yet hoped that so antiquated an object could not excite jealousy in the mind of the fair Sophia.

My horses being thorough bred, they soon overpowered the charioteering skill of their new master, and before I had time to warn him of their spirit, the happy pair were out of sight; and, in another second would have been out of mind also.

We

We had scarcely felicitated ourselves on the debarkation, when the carriage suddenly stopped. Miss Cleveland supposing that we were attacked, shrieked terribly,

“ Piercing the night’s dull ear;”

instantly embraced this convenient opportunity for unburthening the load of grief which jealousy had placed upon her heart, by fainting.

Lady Moreland perceiving the cause of our alarm, endeavoured to dissipate our terrors, by declaring, that it was only Miss Winterton. “ Only Miss Winterton,” said I—“ Can there be any thing worse? I had rather encounter a score of highwaymen, than one Lucretia! Alack! there lies more peril in her eye, than twenty of their *pistols*.”

Courtney now having opened the
door

door of the carriage, with a degree of vehemence unusual to his placid nature, exclaimed, "You are punished for your malice, Sir Francis; for your curricie, I believe, is dashed to pieces."

This dreadful intelligence made me start from my seat; which I had no sooner done, than it was occupied by Courtney, who laughing immoderately at my credulity, in the most insulting tone desired the coachman to "drive on;" leaving me to appease the rage of Miss Winterton.

She refused, however, to accept my attentions, and insisted on my quitting her, adding, that "she never would think of intrusting herself to the protection of a person who was capable of insulting her feelings with odious animadversions;" then seizing the servant's arm, she proceeded towards the priory; and I had the happiness

piness of hearing her woeful lamentations at the distance of about twenty yards before me all the way. At length we arrived at the end of our journey.

On entering, every person seemed to enjoy my mortification. I had scarcely acquainted them of Miss Winterton's disdainful refusal of my services, when she rushed into the room, shrieking, "I am robbed—I am waylaid—I am assassinated!"

"Heavens!" said Lady Moreland, trembling, "what has happened?" "What!" replied Miss Winterton;—"why, enough has happened—I have lost my beautiful family watch, which was presented to me by my grandfather, the worthy Sir Geoffry Winterton, with the story of Hero and Leander painted upon the dial plate, and my mocho-backed case, with my onyx seal, left me by my aunt Lucrecia Firebrass,
— with

with the family arms, three basilisks, finely engraved, and a griphon rampant for the crest!"

I heard our good-natured Cavil observe to Lady Moreland, "it is an happy circumstance that the crest has escaped the general scene of confusion!" Lady Moreland smiled, but made no reply.

When I had suffered her to exhaust her voice and spirits sufficiently, I advanced towards her, with a most respectful bow, and presenting her the watch, said, "that I had preserved it for her, knowing its antiquity, and consequently its value—that I should have delivered my precious charge immediately, but remembering a former instance of her severe correction, and dreading that she might, "in her rage," forget the mocho back, and the onyx seal, to indulge me with a second, I had

had carefully concealed it, till the dreadful tempest should have subsided."

Thus, with mutual apologies, ended our Clifden adventure ; yet, not without many a malicious smile from Lady Cavil, in whose sharp twinkling eyes, triumph and delight seemed to struggle for pre-eminence.

Adieu! Remember how much you are in my debt, and that of all things in nature, an epistolary torment is the worst.

Yours, truly,

FRANCIS COLVILLE.

LETTER

LETTER XLI.

LAURA FITZ-OWEN,

TO SOPHIA CLEVELAND.

Lausanne, Sept. 179.

SINCE the evening that I found Madame St. Bruno at the Shrine of Bertha, she has often accompanied me thither. The last time we went, as soon as we had seated ourselves beside the turf, "This is a melancholy spot, Laura," said she; "yet when we reflect on the many woes that attend this transitory state of probation, we ought to consider the grave rather as a peaceful asylum, than a terrifying goal. There the poorest child of misery finds a resting place; and that pride, which in its voyage thither spurns a wretched fellow-

fellow-traveller, there lays aside all trivial distinction, and owns one common pallet."

While she was speaking, she gathered a flower that embellished the sod; but recollecting herself, she seemed distressed at having done so. She pressed it to her lips. I saw a tear fall upon it, which I fancied revived its withering leaves. She then gently and carefully laid it on the spot from which it was taken, and proceeded—

"The susceptibility of your heart, my dear child, has been fully exemplified, in the attention you have paid to these poor remains. I trust, the soul which once gave animation to these ashes.—"

She could not proceed. I ran to her; I knelt; she rested her head upon my shoulder, and wept like an infant.

“Take comfort, my dear Madam,” said I, “religion teaches the soul to be resigned, while hope anticipates the reward of virtue.

She continued to weep; I entreated her to compose her mind, my solicitations did not draw her attention from the object which she contemplated.

In this distressing situation she continued for some moments, Her eyes were fixed on the grave: she sighed deeply.

“Let us return,” said I, “you are too sensibly impressed with the mournful objects that surround you; why did you impose so severe a task upon your exquisitely feeling mind? My dear Madam, suffer me to attend you to our convent; this scene interests you too deeply. Do not cherish those

those reflections which must be painful."

"They are, indeed," replied Madame St. Bruno, "she was the loveliest and most adored of women!" I was all expectation. She hesitated for a moment, and then continued, "Let us go, Laura," said she; "the clouds that are gathering, threaten a storm. I should be sorry to see the rain fall on this turf, or the rude winds scatter the leaves of the meanest flower that covers it—yet they must fade, only to spring up again, while the relics they adorn, from day to day, moulder to dust, unconscious of the varying seasons. Oh! if we could but penetrate those dark and mysterious labyrinths of futurity, which make the boldest tremble; if I could but know that she is happy, I should not repine."

I took her hand, and gently endeavoured

voured to lead her from a scene so mournful. The sky grew darker, and I was apprehensive of her experiencing some inconvenience from the evening air. "'Tis very cold," said I, "the clouds foretell a stormy night."

She looked earnestly at me, and then bending her eyes upon the grave, she continued—"Poor Bertha! thy once warm bosom would have throbbed with pity, hadst thou beheld the houseless wanderer drenched by the beating tempest, thou wouldst have wept to think, that the child of poverty found a pillow on the damp sod, thou wert a friend to the unhappy, and the badge of sorrow was a never-failing passport to thy heart! Will not the SUPREME, who knew thy virtues, forgive thy crime."

A dreadful peal of thunder at this moment rolled over our heads. I sunk
upon

upon the ground, and hid my face beneath the robe of Madame St. Bruno.

“Thy will be done,” said she, in an awful and firm tone, “Yet, let thy poor servant supplicate thy mercy.”

“Oh! Madam,” said I, forbear, the destiny of Bertha is beyond our feeble intercession; the All Wise, All Good, knows what is best, and we must not interfere with his decrees. Let me conjure you to desist.

The storm passed on, the sky began to brighten, the setting sun shone through the broken wall, exactly on the grave of Bertha. I thought the animated radiance seemed to mock our unavailing grief.

Madame St. Bruno crossed her breast, breathed a silent prayer, and we returned to the convent. As soon

we entered the gates, she retired to her cell.

I am more than ever anxious to know the story of the unfortunate suicide. Is it not very extraordinary that none of the Nuns will gratify my curiosity? Whenever I question them, they change the subject. I have often employed Belinda to exert her ingenuity, but she has been equally unsuccessful. It seems ordained, that oblivion should hide some deed, which nature would blush to develope, I will therefore reconcile my mind to that ignorance, which is perhaps the decree of fate. Alas! I feel but too sensibly, that we cannot oppose our destiny.

Adieu! You often complain of the trivial vexations you have to encounter. I wish we could exchange situations——no! You have all my
feeling

feeling, perhaps not all my fortitude.
Forgive the supposition.

Once more, adieu!

Yours,

LAURA FITZ-OWEN.

LETTER

LETTER LII.

SOPHIA CLEVELAND,

TO LAURA FITZ-OWEN.

Charleton Priory, Sept. 1790.

EVERY letter I receive from my dear Laura, gives me additional uneasiness. Your increasing partiality for Edward Percival alarms me exceedingly. Do not indulge it, my amiable friend. I conjure you to see him no more. Your eternal peace of mind depends upon your resolution.

Prepare for an event, which requires all your fortitude.

Report says, but I will not pretend to assert whether it is with any foundation, that Lord Litchfield has declared his intention of uniting his nephew to
the

the rich heiress of the late Lord Granmore, who was his particular friend. She is somewhere abroad, but on what part of the Continent, whether she is handsome, amiable, or accomplished, I cannot learn.

My dear friend, I am certain her pretensions are not equal to yours ; and I may venture to believe, that such a proposal will not be very acceptable to your amiable cousin, who has given too strong a proof of his good taste in his admiration of you, to accede to such an union.

I lament that he depends so much on the caprices of Lord Litchfield, and that his future expectations will rest on his obedience ; yet I think his nature is too generous to barter happiness for fortune, and still believe that he is " heir to his affections." On the other hand, I know that you would rather

ther cease to exist, than endure the self-reproach of having destroyed his expectations.

I wish Lord Litchfield could only see you ; his inexorable heart would soften, and he would be a convert to your perfections. I am no flatterer ; I leave that task to those, who do not esteem you.

'Tis rumoured, that he means to recall his nephew immediately for the arrangement of the marriage settlements ; but I have too good an opinion of Mr. Percival, to believe he will be the tame assassin of his own peace of mind.

I know not what to say, or how to advise. I only hope that he is not very dear to you, and that the impression he has made, is merely the effect of your never having mixed in the societies

cieties of the world. When you reach Vienna, perhaps the gaiety of the scenes around you will dissipate the gloom which darkens your present prospects. Believe me, there are few men existing who are worthy of a sigh from a feeling bosom.

Madame St. Bruno will give you counsel, she is an angelic being; and there must be consolation in all her precepts: follow them, and you cannot fail to do what is right.

Remember, I only give you this intelligence upon report. My heart will rejoice in finding it untrue. The world is fond of invention, which malice never fails to improve.

We are still at Charleton Priory, where the worthy Sir Hervey exemplifies his usual hospitality. He is a most engaging creature, and exactly what
an

an old man should be ; unaffected, and well bred ; neither a cynic, or a coxcomb ; without the pedantry of a tutor, or the gallantry of a lover. But I believe I have given you his portrait in a former letter—I shall therefore arrest my pen, and return to a subject nearer my heart, your happiness.

My dearest Laura, again I conjure you to banish the image of Edward Percival from your imagination. He is amiable, I confess ; but recollect, that inconstancy is the characteristic of his sex. Many a young woman has been rendered ridiculous, by having attended to the artful tales of practised deceivers. Men are always eager to wound the credulous breast—and the heart that is easily won, is seldom valued. Remember that pride is the best shield the female heart can wear.

The human mind is so fond of every
thing

thing which is scarce, that we see the most transcendent beauties of nature neglected, while her coarsest productions are held in the highest estimation. You will laugh at me for an old moralizing sermon-spinning pedant.

That you are a jewel of the purest brilliancy will not be doubted; but you are not the first that has shed its lustre in obscurity, a lot more enviable than to be in the possession of one unworthy of such a treasure.

Adieu, my dearest Laura.

Believe me

Yours affectionately,

SOPHIA CLEVELAND.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

VOL. I.

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Yours all affectionately

SOPHIA CLARENDON

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME

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